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March/April 2020

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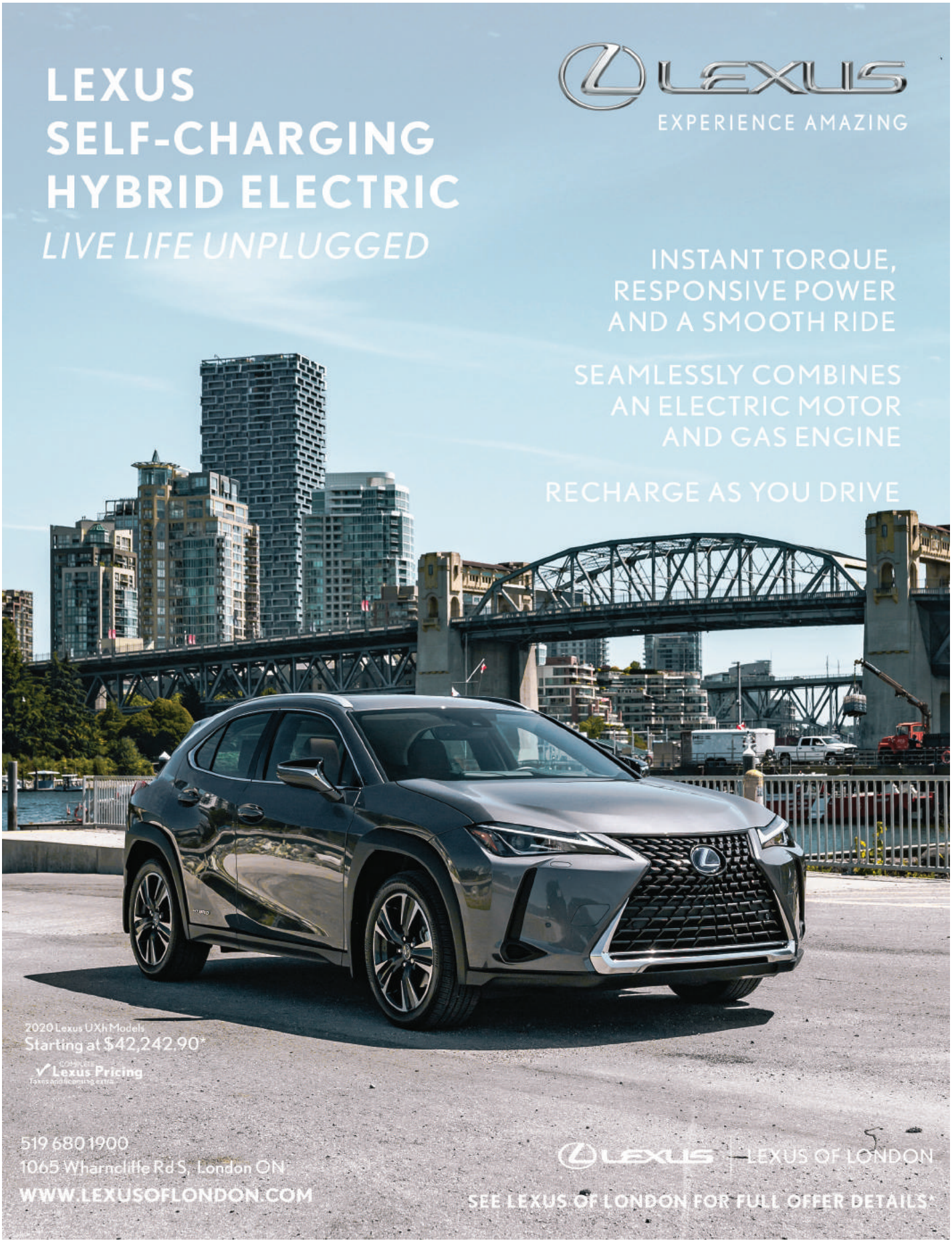
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MARCH/APRIL 2020
London & Area Edition

Indoor camp continues to grow

Submitted by London Minor Football Association

While the fall football season is still a few months away, offseason programs run by the London Minor Football Association (LMFA) – which are open to everyone – have been in full swing throughout the winter.

Every Friday night this winter at Centrefield Sports in London, about 100 girls and boys are having fun and getting better at the LMFA Indoor Skills Camp. This non-contact camp was the first football skills camp in London and is now into its eighth year. The camp has become bigger and better every year, mainly thanks to our great roster of coaches. As well, student volunteers from Laurier HS, Saunders HS, Catholic Central HS and South HS provide great role models for the players while passing along their knowledge of the game and their experience.

"I don't need the community hours, I just love working with the kids, so count me in every year," says Kevin Dickens from Laurier HS.

Players take the field for 90 minutes of drills and skills, including agility, footwork, ball handling, and introductions to blocking and tackling. With an emphasis on having fun and teaching fundamentals, the camp is great for new players as well as returning players looking to stay active.

This summer, LMFA will host the 2nd annual QB passing camp for aspiring quarterbacks and receivers, while a brand new lineman camp will also start up – both at Centrefield Sports.

Looking ahead, the registration for the fall house league season is already open online for everyone in the Under 10, Under 12 and Under 14 age divisions.

Please visit www.lmfafootball.ca or call 519-852-4465 for more information.

www.lmfafootball.ca

A young camper with CCH volunteer Aiden Cahill (left)

Laurier HS volunteer Kevin Dickens takes part in drills

Saunders student volunteer Jacob Sheardown (left) is one of many instructors who act as role models for campers at LMFA's indoor sessions

Photo by Patrick DesRosiers. LMFA's Indoor Skills Camp not only helps build skills, it's a lot of fun too!

Now in its eighth year, the LMFA Indoor Skills Camp continues to get bigger and better every year. Held at Centrefield Sports throughout the winter months, the sessions provide youngsters with the opportunity to work on their skills from older and more experienced players.

thelineup

football ..... pg 3
fitness ..... pgs 4-7
baseball ..... pgs 8-10
soccer ..... pgs 12-15
cycling ..... pg 14
lacrosse ..... pg 15
athletics ..... pgs 16-17
golf ..... pgs 17-19
karate ..... pgs 21-22
volleyball ..... pgs 24-26
diving ..... pg 28
basketball ..... pgs 30-31
gymnastics ..... pgs 32-35
cheerleading ..... pgs 36-37
dance ..... pgs 38-40
skating ..... pg 43
ringette ..... pg 44
hockey ..... pgs 45-58
wheelchair rugby ..... pg 54

Special thanks to Adam Stern (Centrefield Sports) for the cover photo.

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A focus on families

Contributions by Christina Matthews

It's a place for families, and everyone is welcome. The YMCA of Southwestern Ontario prides itself on enriching the community through 'growth in spirit, mind, and body' for people of all backgrounds, beliefs, and abilities. And it's especially great for families.

After all, busy families need a place designed just for them. At the YMCA, families receive all-in-one programming and schedules that suit the whole family.

"Our all-in rates give families access to everything they want," says Christina Matthews, the general manager at the YMCA of Southwestern Ontario. "Family memberships include programs like soccer, basketball, swimming lessons, dance and cooking classes for children."

Group fitness classes, meanwhile, are offered for moms and dads, while the whole family has access to the pool and the gym. The YMCA offers free child minding, and a variety of discounted day camps.

And the benefits of the YMCA are available to all. It's a big part of what the organization stands for.

"We believe that everyone deserves access to our programs and services," says Matthews, "which is why we offer financial assistance to families in need."

The YMCA means welcoming, it means belonging, and it means opportunity. If you haven't visited the YMCA, drop by and join the community!

www.ymcawo.ca

The YMCA of Southwestern Ontario offers numerous programs and activities for families, who can spend their time being active and/or creative in a welcoming environment.

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SportsXpress Network

MARCH/APRIL 2020

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Member of the month...

Submitted by 9Round London

One of our favourite parts about 9Round is seeing the progress being made by our members every day. While many of our members have great success stories, we want to highlight one individual in this issue who has made exceptional improvement towards her personal health and fitness journey.

Since joining the 9Round family in April, Sarah has completed almost 100 workouts with us, in addition to performing workouts outside of the club with her personal trainer. Sarah started working towards a healthier lifestyle with a trainer awhile ago, and when she decided to switch up her cardio routine, her trainer suggested kickboxing as a fun change. Sarah tried out 9Round, and she hasn't looked back since. We are so happy to have Sarah as a positive addition to our community – and as an inspiration to other members.

Sarah has lost 20 pounds since beginning her weight loss journey with 9Round. The change in routine has helped her to get past a plateau she was struggling with when she first joined. It has also contributed to her overall strength and endurance – in addition to weight loss. Not only has Sarah made amazing progress in terms of her weight loss, but she has also achieved personal goals during her time here as well.

Around the club's members and trainers, Sarah is known for two things: push-ups and burpees. Both movements used to be a struggle for Sarah, but now she is a pro at them. While push-ups from her knees used to be a challenge, Sarah is now able to complete 10 full push-ups in a row with perfect form. She also has a love-hate relationship with burpees. Here at 9Round, whenever the song 'Thunderstruck' by ACDC comes on, we start a burpee challenge. That is, whenever the word 'thunder' is said in the song, the group does one burpee. The first time Sarah tried the burpee challenge, she completed 35 burpees with assistance from our highest box. By the end of January, Sarah completed over 100 burpees on our lowest box during the burpee challenge.

We are continuously amazed by the progress that Sarah makes every time she steps into the club. She always comes in with motivation to push herself and improve, despite also working out twice a week with her trainer (and working two jobs!). In recognition of her consistent dedication, perseverance and progress, we have recognized Sarah as 9Round London's member of the month for January.

Sarah has been a regular at 9Round London for several months, working hard to achieve a healthier lifestyle. She loves kickboxing, and she is known gym-wide for her push-ups and burpees. Sarah was 9Round's 'Member of the Month' for January.

Social media and the law

By Nick Cake

I have said it before, and I will say it again: be careful what you post online. Social media is a great way to connect with friends and stay in touch – or to brag about all the expensive things you bought at the mall. But it is also a tool more often used now to increase social status and further business or career aspirations. Kim Kardashian and her family built an empire off of just one video posted on social media. As more and more people aspire to become social media influencers, it seems like limits are being pushed, and the cops and the crown are watching and waiting.

The young lady now unfortunately famously known as #chairgirl was in a Toronto court in mid-February beginning the process of being sentenced for throwing a patio chair off the balcony of a high rise condo building, which crashed to the ground near a woman and her baby in a stroller. The video of this stupid act was put on Instagram and #chairgirl rose in popularity, acquiring nearly 50,000 followers, a modelling contract and social media influence. The crown focused their submissions on the purpose of posting the video online and all the advancements that the accused had made because of her criminal offence.

> "The law is designed to change with the times, and it appears that there is a push to take it to the Internet and social media."

The crown was arguing that the sentence should be aggravated by the reality that #chairgirl profited from the crime. The Crown wanted to hammer that fact home, making the sentence more severe.

I can imagine that this approach will continue as more and more people look to push the limits on their social media stunts into the realm of criminal activity in the name of fame. We need to look no further than the wannabe rapper on the plane to Jamaica, also in February, who thought it would be a good idea to put on a medical mask and tell the entire plane multiple times that he had just returned from overseas in hopes of raising his social media following on the eve of releasing his new 'album.'

If the trend continues, there is no doubt that the Crown – and even the lawmakers themselves – will look to influence the court and turn attempted social media advancement into an aggravating factor to be considered in a sentence. The law is designed to change with the times, and it appears that there is a push to take it to the Internet and social media. If the need strikes, then push the limits – but don't dance over the line. If you do happen to go too far, or you know someone who has, the team at Millars Law is here for you to ensure that one mistake doesn't hang over you for the rest of your life. Call or DM for a consultation today, because you can't afford to lose.

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www.millarslaw.com

Gratitude and growth

Submitted by RPG Training Systems

RPG Training Systems is proud to be celebrating its first year of business! The RPG team of coaches is quickly becoming recognized for their quality of training and devotion to developing well-rounded youth strength and conditioning programs.

"Our philosophy is that all athletes – and people – have untapped (sport) potential that can be brought to the surface with a foundation of quality movement training, strength, speed, and power development," says RPG Owner, Coach Rory.

With roots in the volleyball community, RPG has expanded to support athletes in a variety of sports, including baseball, football, soccer, track & field, and powerlifting.

"Training is not sport-specific. Sports are sport-specific," says Coach Rory. "Training is designed to explore various loads, speeds, movements and situations that ensure athletes are well-balanced. Effectively, we are here to manage the volume and stress that sports put on the athletes' body and at the same time teach them how to harness their abilities to excel in sport – and life."

With two locations (including services at Centerfield Sports), RPG is ready and eager to continue growing in the London/St. Thomas communities through its commitment to 'Building a Stronger Generation.' RPG is also devoted to building stronger communities, and the organization has pledged to donate funds and resources to local schools and school programs to foster various sport and healthy living initiatives.

We would love to be in touch and discuss how we can support your school, team, and club. Please reach out to us at www.rpgtrainingsystems.com.

RPG would like to recognize the amazing athletes we support within the following organizations...

www.rpgtrainingsystems.com

Calendar of Events

Contact: London@SportsXpress.ca

March 16-20
March Madness Youth Soccer Tournament, BMO Centre

March 21-22
Speed & Custom Car Show, Western Fair District

March 27-29
2020 Junior/Senior Canadian Wrestling Championships, Western Fair District

March 28-19
London Gold Medal Basketball Tournament Midget Boys, Saunders Secondary School

April 3-5
London Pickleball Club Tournament, Total Tennis London

April 11
Harlem Globetrotters, Budweiser Gardens

April 18-19
London Gold Medal Basketball Tournament Boys, Saunders Secondary School

April 22
64th Annual Sports Celebrity Dinner, RBC Place London

April 24-26
2nd Annual Spring Hockey Tournament, Western Fair Sports Centre

April 26
Forest City Road Races, Victoria Park

April 27
Ontario Men's Better Ball Championship Qualifier, The Oakes

May 3
Stars On Ice, Budweiser Gardens

May 7-8
Great Lakes Tour London Championship, Tarandowah Golf Club

May 9
Professional Bull Riders-Monster Energy Tour, Budweiser Gardens

May 9
Junior U19 Girls & Boys Spring Classic Qualifiers, Firerock Golf Club

May 9
Opening Drag Race Weekend, Grand Bend Motorplex

May 9
Hockey Helps The Homeless London, Western Fair Sports Centre

May 15
London Majors Home Opener vs. Hamilton Cardinals, Labatt Park

May 16
2020 Opening Icebreaker, Delaware Speedway

May 16-17
GOT GAME Street Hockey & Street Basketball Tournaments, Victoria Park

May 20
SPO High School Slo-Pitch Provincial Championships, Slo Pitch City

May 22-24
St. Thomas Minor Rookie, Minor Mosquito, and Major Mosquito Baseball Tournament, Doug Tarry Sports Complex

May 23-24
Fanshawe Yacht Club Annual Open House, Fanshawe Conservation Area

May 29-31
St. Thomas Minor Baseball Major Rookie, Minor Peewee, & Major Peewee Tournament, Doug Tarry Sports Complex

May 29
Camluck Classic, Western Fair Raceway

June 6
Running Against Ruptures, Springbank Gardens

June 10
Royal LePage Triland Charity Golf Tournament, Fire Rock Golf & Country Club

June 12
Make-A-Wish Rope For Hope, One London Place

June 12-14
Battle By The Beach, Grand Bend Motorplex

June 12-14
CSL Mid Season Tournament, Byron Optimist Sports Complex

June 13
Fanshawe Dragon Boat Festival, Fanshawe Conservation Area

June 13
Brooke Connell 4th Annual Golf Tournament, Firerock Golf Club

June 15
Lexus of London Golf Classic, The Oaks Golf Course

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CENTREFIELD SPORTS

Indoor prep for outdoor success

Submitted by Centrefield Sports

With Spring around the corner, players have been flooding into Centrefield Sports (CFS) to work on honing their skills before their seasons begin. CFS continues to offer programs, such as clinics, camps and private lessons, for players to work on improving their skills right up until the season begins – with the guidance of our staff of former professional and collegiate baseball players.

Highlighting our pre-Spring season is our March Break Camp, run this year by former professional pitcher Shane Davis. With half-day, full-day and full-week options available, players use the March Break period to work on their skills while taking some time off school! Full-week participants receive progress reports from coaches to show how they progressed throughout the camp. Call or visit our website to register your player for a fun-filled week at the field!

Before heading back outdoors to the diamonds, we also have our March/April clinics kicking off for 7 & 8-week options. With clinic options available for players from 5 to 17 years old, there is something for everyone! Visit our website or call in to register, as spots are limited.

Outside of our lessons, camps, clinics, leagues and rentals, memberships to Centrefield Sports are flexible and available in accommodating packages to suit all of your athletic needs. Don't miss out on the opportunity to book batting cage and field space. Visit us at the field for all of your training needs!

www.centrefieldsports.com

Young ballplayers have the opportunity to improve their skills throughout the year at Centrefield Sports, which features clinics, camps and private lessons – taught by former professional and collegiate-level ballplayers.

Office fun for a great cause

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THAMES VALLEY EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Submitted by Preferred Insurance

The team at Preferred Insurance recently participated again this year in the 'Toonie Tuesday' program supporting The Thames Valley Education Foundation.

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The staff at Preferred Insurance turn the occasion into an entire day of fun and fundraising at the office.

Starting with a $2 pancake breakfast, the day then proceeds into a number of toonie draws, an aces wild card game, and a few toonie toss games – all with some fantastic prizes to be won.

The past couple of years, Preferred has also been engaging its clients and the general public to make a donation for a chance to win a pair of tickets in a suite for the London Knights' first playoff game.

"We love the work and support that is

Use #LondonSportsXpress and get FEATURED!

Staying on the field

Submitted by London Mens Baseball League

Canadian Winters can be long – especially when the London Men's Baseball League (LMBL) doesn't begin until May.

Due to the short season, which runs from May to September, it means that we experience a very long offseason. One of the risks we face as summer 'weekend warriors' is thinking that our bodies are still capable of what they were when we were younger. When we jump back into the baseball season after being largely inactive over the winter, our bodies are primed for injury.

Scott Verhaeghe, who is an R.M.T. at Function First (and also a member of the LMBL Brewers) has some expertise on the subject.

"As we age (into our 30s and beyond), our muscles decrease in size and tone, and our tendons stiffen and become less resistant to stress," says Verhaeghe. "Our hearts also become less efficient at delivering larger quantities of blood to our muscles. All of these factors increase the risk of injuries."

So, with the potential for injury, here are some things to work on during the offseason and before games:

- Always warm up before physical activity and cool down before finishing.
- Do light stretching.
- Commit to fitness throughout the week.
- Rest and listen to your body.
- See a physical therapist.

The importance of regular exercise, a warmup routine and increased water intake is even more important now than when we were in our youth. When we take care of ourselves pre-game and in-game, we will be able to enjoy the hydration of those post-game adult beverages a lot more when we are injury-free and (largely) pain free.

www.lmblbaseball.ca

Players on the LMBL's Orioles get in some offseason conditioning work (from left to right): Bobby Russelo, Adam Stafford, Jeff Reid and Dave Jaques.

Mitch and Rob Barton, brothers and teammates on the Orioles, take part in stretching exercises to help prevent injury and prepare themselves for another ball season.

provided by the Thames Valley Education Foundation, so we get on board and involved however we can," says Peter Carr of Preferred Insurance.

For her part, Jackie Ellefsen, Executive Director at The Thames Valley Education Foundation, says the company's support is greatly appreciated.

"You know those friends? The ones who are there for you no matter what, and always find a way to lend a helping hand? That's how we at TVEF feel about our good friends at Preferred Insurance."

www.preferred-ins.com

The staff at Preferred Insurance once again participated in the Toonie Tuesday program this year to support the Thames Valley Education Foundation. And they had a lot of fun doing so!

Little Sluggers, Tball divisions a big hit

Submitted by Eager Beaver Baseball Association

This will be the 15th season that Eager Beaver Baseball Association (EBBA) has introduced some of the youngest players to the game of baseball since adding the Little Sluggers and Tball divisions to their lineup.

The Little Slugger division, for players who will be turning 4 or 5 this year, introduces the young players to baseball-specific skills through a series of practice stations which help to develop those skills (ie. batting, throwing, base running). The Little Slugger program is assisted each week by players from the London Tecumsehs competitive teams.

Tball players get some instruction before taking the field for EBBA baseball action last summer

Little Sluggers has five one-hour sessions on Saturday mornings, running from May 30 to June 27.

The one-hour sessions fly by as the younger players learn the game from the older players, and the older players come away with a new appreciation of the game – and a legion of little fans!

The Tball division, for players turning 6 and 7 this year, also uses practice stations, run by the team coach, as a means to teach baseball skills in a structured, non-competitive environment. Half of the hour-and-a-half session is spent rotating through four stations (batting, throwing, catching and baserunning). The other half is spent scrimmaging, where parents and coaches direct the action on the field and provide instruction to players on both teams. This is where parents are encouraged to get out on the scrimmage field to participate. Parent participation is crucial to the success of the program.

TBall has nine one-and-a-half hour sessions on Saturday mornings, running from May 9 to July 11. The final session for Tball on July 11 is held at Labatt Park for the annual Colman Day celebrations.

Be sure to get your registration in on time! Online registration closes March 31, 2020. The final in-person registration is Saturday, March 21 from 10am-2pm at the EBBA office at 652 Elizabeth St. in London.

For questions about any of EBBAs programs, email info@ebba.ca.

www.ebba.ca

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An adventure in Namibia

By Bonnie Hinschberger

When the opportunity arose for me to scout out four countries in Southern Africa, I jumped at the chance and never looked back. Today, as I write, I am sitting on a private balcony from my spacious chalet in Namibia overlooking the Chobe River. Across the river, Botswana is in the background. The welcomed showers which arrived three weeks ago have allowed for most of the elephants to start their annual journey inland, where food sources are now available.

As the rains become heavier, the water level will rise, and the island will be under water. The grass, which is now short, will grow up to 12 feet high and be ready to provide food for the thousands of animals that will migrate back to this area during the dry season. For now, it remains a favourite grassland for hippos and cape buffalo, and a beautiful scene in which to view from my balcony. This journey through Zimbabwe, Zambia, Botswana and Namibia has been nothing short of exceptional. Although close in proximity, each country offers its own unique opportunities, and I recommend visiting all of them if time permits.

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The game viewing from Namibia is primarily done by boat. Our small group was assigned our own private pontoon boat with comfortable bucket seats and a private viewing section upstairs. Today we have two riverboat excursions planned, the first primarily a mode of transportation to a local village.

The welcoming villagers proudly showed us around where they live in harmony with nature. Their mud huts provide the necessities for families to live together comfortably. The community well, which they funded on their own, is deep enough to provide the community of 150 clean running water and irrigation for their vegetable garden. Women and children entertained us with their traditional songs and dances, and the boys enjoyed an impromptu soccer challenge with one of our fellow travellers.

As we sailed off, hippos could be seen both in the water and on land. Crocodiles were plentiful, as were cape buffalo and several species of birds. Along the shores were playful impalas. But the most incredible sights, by far, were the large herds of elephants. Happy to be in and around the water, these large gentle giants moved from one side of the river to the other, playfully swimming right in front of us.

At one point, we watched a family of about 40 saunter into the water, swim across the river, and walk up the other side. Like all game viewing, one must live in the moment and embrace the experiences that nature provides.

As we continued our journey, the sun was starting to set, and the sky was turning brilliant shades of pinks, yellows and reds. The skies were lit up in every direction. Sadly, our river boat game viewing was coming to an end, but this extraordinary ride will become a life-long memory of my time spent in Namibia – and the perfect end to a magical day.

Bonnie Hinschberger is Co-Founder of Broad Escapes, Tours for Women, a division of Ellison Travel & Tours

www.ellisontravel.com

Big year for soccer club

Submitted by FC LONDON

The 2020 season has barely started and already FC LONDON and London TFC Academy are making strides.

Michael Marcoccia, who has led the squad to several championships over the past few years, will again be behind the bench for both the Men's and Women's League1 teams.

Photo by WERDER.de. FC LONDON's Belal Halbouni signs with Werder Bremen, a German football club

Photo by League1 Ontario. Halbouni, who enjoyed a successful career wearing the FC LONDON uniform, is off to Europe to continue his soccer journey.

Further, Marcoccia is taking on a Soccer Director role with ASAD (Academy for Student Athlete Development), as FC LONDON joins forces with the Thames Valley School Board to bring a true soccer academy program to London high school students. Originally founded in Durham, ASAD is a flagship sports program that combines education and soccer within the high-school curriculum.

A flagship moment for the club is the recent signing of FC LONDON's Belal Halbouni by Werder Bremen in Germany.

"Our goal is to create opportunities for players, and this is an example of what hard work and tenacity can achieve," says Marcoccia.

FC LONDON has also signed a multi-part partnership agreement with MLS, Toronto FC, and Adidas and will wear Adidas gear in 2020. This gives the club extra benefits around training, events, and promotions across North America.

Tricar field, the future home of London TFC Academy, has broken ground in southwest London and is currently targeting a May 15 launch date.

"It's already booked solid for the entire season," says FC LONDON President Ian Campbell. "It's very exciting for our club and the soccer community to have an additional turf field with lights available where athletes can excel."

FC LONDON is finalizing its summer home-game schedule for both men and women, which will start in early May.

www.fclondon.ca

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TUES	ADULT CO-ED	6V6
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THUR	WOMEN'S MASTERS 30+	7V7
SUN	WOMEN'S WEEKEND MASTERS 30+	7V7

AIR CONDITIONED FIELDS

MAY TO AUGUST INCLUDES PLAYOFFS

Ladies repeat as indoor champs

Submitted by NorWest Soccer and Ontario Soccer

The NorWest (NW) Soccer Club is excited to welcome Coach John Fleming, and many players from the NW London

Football Academy, back to NorWest Soccer this year! And we are proud to congratulate the U-18 Girls on their Indoor Ontario Cup title win in February, where they defended their crown and won for the second year in a row!

At the indoor championships at the Ontario Soccer Centre in Vaughan, goalkeeper Taylor Mitchener made four saves in penalties to help lift NorWest Soccer to the title over the Erin Mills Eagles.

Prior to the final, the U-18 Girls played a tournament round on the Saturday and a semi-final game on the Sunday. NorWest and Erin Mills met in the tournament round and drew 0-0. Making it to the semi-final, NorWest took on the North Mississauga Black Panthers, defeating them 2-0, while Erin Mills narrowly defeated Ottawa, 1-0, to advance to the final.

And it was an exciting final. The first half featured both sides carefully plotting out their opportunities and not allowing much on the offensive end for either team. Minus a few good chances that weren't converted, both sides played a tight, conservative first half, which closed out with the teams knotted at 0-0.

The second half was more of the same

Velodrome a hidden gem

Contributions by Forest City Velodrome

It's a place where you can stay warm while riding your bike throughout the winter. Some say it's a hidden gem in London. It is London's indoor cycling track, Forest City Velodrome (FCV).

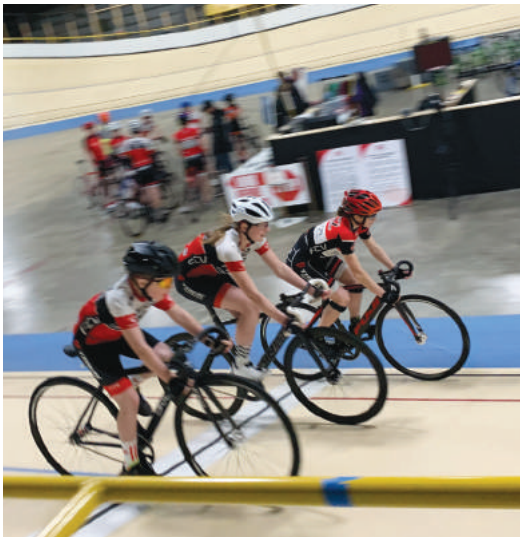
"The Velodrome provides a unique opportunity for people of all ages and abilities to experience riding a bike while having a blast," says Craig Saari, president of FCV. "It's a great place to socialize and stay active through the winter, and everyone is welcome!"

FCV offers 'Learn to Ride' (Track 1) regularly for those who want to try out the facility. All you need is a helmet and shoes, as FCV has track bikes that you can borrow to give it a try. Also offered at the Velodrome is 'VeloKids,' a kids learn-to-ride program. Youth who complete VeloKids have gone on to join Attack Racing, a London-based youth racing team which competes year-round in track, road and mountain biking, as well as cyclocross.

"VeloKids was an amazing program for my son," says Sarah, a parent of a VeloKids graduate. "The coaches are patient, friendly and encouraging, and they really made the experience so much fun. My son graduated and joined Attack Racing, and he LOVES it. My family is so happy that we found VeloKids and FCV!"

For more information on FCV, its programs or how to get involved, visit:

www.forestcityvelodrome.ca



The Forest City Velodrome (FCV), an indoor cycling track in London, offers people of all ages with the opportunity to bike during the winter months. The Velodrome offers 'Learn to Ride' programs and other programs for kids eager to get on the bike and have a lot of fun.

Proudly sponsored by

PATRICK'S BEANS
Coffee on the level

Velodrome Fundraiser

A neat fundraising program has been taking place at the Forest City Velodrome (FCV) through a partnership with Patrick's Beans. The Velodrome raises funds by selling 1lb bags of coffee to its members and friends. The end result? Visitors get to enjoy a great cup of coffee while helping to raise funds for the track.

"The program with Patrick's Beans has been amazing," says Craig Saari, FCV president. "There are many options to choose from, and the beans are remarkable! We order on a weekly basis and fresh beans are delivered. We have been running it for several years now and plan to continue for the future. It's a great deal, and everyone wins!"

www.forestcityroadraces.com

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as both sides pressed for an opener. Each side traded chances throughout the second half, but once again neither side could find a way through, and the game was sent to penalties to break the 0-0 deadlock.

In penalties, both keepers showed their best. Erin Mills' goalie, Alexi Hryshko-Barry, made three saves but it was NorWest's Taylor Mitchener who stood even taller, making four saves to lift the London team to their second straight U-18 Girls Ontario Indoor Cup title.

norwestsoccer.com

The winning London team...Back row (left to right): John Fleming (coach), Rachel Rosborough, Maddy Wilson, Cassidy Wuytenburg, Elysse Fleming, Taylor Mitchener, Ally Hicks, Karsen Fuhrman, Jenna Murray, MJ Andrus, Avarie Thomas, Penney Shore (manager). Front row: Holly Remisch, Jen Milligan, Mackenzie Bilotta, Mikayla Talbot, Alicia Domingues, Lauren Mainprize

NorWest's London Football Academy team earned gold at the U-18 Girls Indoor Ontario Cup in Vaughan in early February. The team defeated Erin Mills in penalties following a 0-0 draw in regulation.

LONDON BLUE DEVILS LACROSSE NEWS

2020 Try Lacrosse with the London Blue Devils

The 2020 try lacrosse program was a huge success this year. We held four try lacrosse nights with every session at max capacity. It was an excellent opportunity for any kids interested in learning more about the sport of lacrosse to mix it up with coaches, trainers, and other lacrosse players.

During the try lacrosse night, kids of all ages get to experience different training drills, stick and ball-handling skills, and how to shoot on net. It's a great introduction to a fast and exhilarating sport.

If you missed one of the try lacrosse programs check our website for future dates. You could still register for either the house league or competitive leagues for 2020. Details are available on the website www.londonlacrosse.com, and we'd love to see you become part of the LMLA family for 2020.

www.londonlacrosse.com

Bandits on the run

TRACK & FIELD

Submitted by London Western Track & Field

London, Ontario has always been known for its success in athletics, but recently the sport of running has excelled on the National level – more specifically, the group of distance runners from the London Western Track Club. In fact, last fall the Senior Men's Cross-Country team won the 2019 Canadian Cross-Country Championships in Abbotsford, BC. It was the first time in club history that this team has been crowned national champs.

The 'Backroads Bandits,' a group of elite distance runners in London who train within the London Western Track Club, have been making a name for themselves over the past year, thanks in part to winning the Canadian Cross-Country Championships in Abbotsford, BC last fall. They'll look to repeat as champs in the fall of 2020.

This group of elite runners also goes by the name 'Backroads Bandits.' They train seven days a week, and they are nationally ranked from the 1500m event all the way to the Marathon. These men have something special going, and they are doing a fantastic job not only of being successful but also having fun while doing it.

There are many good runners across Canada, but the hub of distance running is starting to be more prominent in London, Ontario – because of this talented and dedicated group of runners. Their season goes year-round, with an indoor track season in the winter, an outdoor track season in the summer, and a cross-country/road season in the fall. The 2020 Canadian Cross-Country Championships are being held in Abbotsford again, and people are already calling it 'Bandit land.' If you ever see this group of athletes running around London, don't hesitate to say hello to them – or even join them on their run! They are going places.

www.londonwesterntfc.com

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Kids helping kids

londonkidstriathlon.com

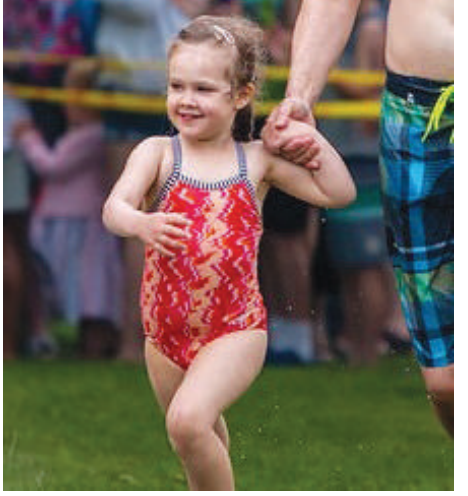
Submitted by London Kids Triathlon

The London Kids Triathlon is back! Since 2012, London has held a triathlon for kids at Carling Heights Optimist Community Centre. It has always been a success, and it has included so many families. This year, the event is under new management and it promises to be the best year yet! The 2020 London Kids Triathlon will be held on June 14!

Promoting physical wellbeing of the youth in our community is important. It's all about #kidshelpingkids, and all proceeds from the event will be supporting Youth Opportunities Unlimited (YOU) and their 'Joan's Place' project.

Since 1982, YOU has helped lead youth in London and Middlesex County toward success, and they believe that investing in youth and strong communities go hand in hand. Joan's Place will create hope and opportunity for all youth at risk by providing them with the tools and skills they need to overcome their challenges with addiction, mental health, housing, education, and unemployment, and become part of the community around them.

We know that everyone needs a place to call home, and we are thrilled to be working alongside YOU in support of this very important London-based project.



The London Kids Triathlon is back in a big way in 2020, and this year's event, to be held June 14, will be raising money for the 'Joan's Place' project at Youth Opportunities Unlimited (YOU), whose aim is to create hope and opportunity for at-risk youth in the community.

Kids aged 3 to 15 are welcome to come and give it a TRI for YOU!

Sign up for the London Kids Triathlon today by visiting us online and join the fun on June 14!

www.londonkidstriathlon.com

City of London Municipal Golf 2020

5 great courses at affordable prices.

The City of London Municipal Golf System consists of five great golf courses at three facilities. Thames Valley, Fanshawe and River Road Golf Course. All sites offer a fully stocked pro shop, food and beverage services as well as member and private tournaments.

Golfers have the option to pay guest fees as they play or purchase a regular or unlimited golf membership. There are no initiation fees, shares or monthly assessments with the City of London Municipal Golf Course System. All fees are considered reasonable and in keeping with a public course operation.

Questions? We are at your service. Please stop by one of our pro shops or call 519-661-4450.

Unlimited Memberships:

Designed to give great value to the avid golfer expecting the best experiences at all City of London golf courses. This membership gives you access with no restrictions to all of our golf courses for a one-time fee.

Unlimited Membership
Unlimited golf at all sites – 7 days a week.

Youth (9-18)	$475
Intermediate (19-24)	$950
Intermediate (25-29)	$1,000
Adult (30+)	$1,525
Senior (65+)	$1,375

Unlimited Value (30+) $1,125

Unlimited play at any golf course Monday to Friday. Unlimited play at River Road, the Quarry and the Hickory 9 on weekends at no charge. ★May play the Traditional and the Classic on weekends for a regular member green fee.★

Unlimited Hickory (19+) $650

Unlimited golf on the Hickory Course - 7 days a week

Unlimited Youth Hickory (7-18) $275

Unlimited golf on the Hickory Course only – 7 days a week. Juniors under 9 years of age must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

All membership age categories will be defined by August 31, 2020.

2020 Payment Plans

Monthly payment plans will be available for select Unlimited Golf Memberships and payments can start as early as March. Payments may be made by credit card or direct debit from your bank account. Cheques cannot be used for payment plans.

All memberships must be paid in full by July 1st.

Unlimited Youth (9-18)	$525
Unlimited Intermediate (19-24)	$1,000
Unlimited Value (30+)	$1,175
Unlimited Adult (30+)	$1,575
Unlimited Senior (65+)	$1,425

All memberships are subject to HST.

Regular Memberships:

Designed for the golfer who plays a minimum of 15 rounds per year and is looking for affordable, reduced green fees. Golfers will pay the initial regular membership fee and then a reduced green fee all season long – 7 days a week at all locations. Please see the regular member green fee charts below.

Regular Membership

Youth (9-18)	$149
Adult (19+)	$259
Senior (65+)	$239

Any golf course – 7 days a week pay a reduced green fee.

Thames Valley Hickory (19+) $149
7 days a week - pay a reduced green fee on the Hickory 9.

Junior Thames Valley Hickory (7-18) $49
7 days a week – pay a reduced green fee on the Hickory 9. Juniors under 9 years of age must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Thames Valley Classic & Fanshawe Traditional	
PRIME TIME:	$25.00
NON-PRIME TIME:	$20.00
TWILIGHT:	$15.00
JUNIOR (9-18):	$12.00

Fanshawe Quarry & River Road	
PRIME TIME:	$20.00
FANSHAWE QUARRY PRIME TIME GOLF & CART PACKAGE:	$36.00
NON-PRIME TIME:	$18.00
TWILIGHT:	$15.00
JUNIOR (9-18):	$12.00

Thames Valley Hickory 9	
ADULT:	$12.00
JUNIOR (9-18):	$10.00

Guest Green Fees

Thames Valley Classic & Fanshawe Traditional	
PRIME TIME:	$44.00
PRIME TIME GOLF & CART PACKAGE:	$56.00
NON-PRIME TIME:	$37.00
TWILIGHT:	$25.00
JUNIOR (9-18):	$20.00

Fanshawe Quarry & River Road	
PRIME TIME:	$35.00
FANSHAWE QUARRY PRIME TIME GOLF & CART PACKAGE:	$47.00
NON-PRIME TIME:	$32.00
TWILIGHT:	$25.00
JUNIOR (9-18):	$20.00

Thames Valley Hickory 9	
ADULT:	$22.00
JUNIOR (9-18):	$18.00

Please check the website and pro shops for more information on non-prime time and twilight rates. (Green fee pricing includes HST.)

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519-661-4450 (Press 3)

For Tee Times 519-661-4450 • london.ca/golf

The best youth golf experience

Submitted by London Junior Golf Development Centre

The 2020 golf season has arrived, and our junior golf programs are in full swing! Juniors in the London and surrounding area are filling up two programs provided by the London Junior Golf Development Centre for the golf season.
They include ...

Learn to Golf

The Learn to Golf program is an innovative program that allows young players to learn the game in a safe and fun environment. The early stage of this program focuses on the fundamentals (developing physical literacy and an introduction to golf-specific skills). As the program progresses, players have the opportunity to learn and master the fine motor skills in combination with other skills (ie. balance and swinging the club at the same time). Juniors can participate for the entire season or for the months that fit into their schedule.

Junior Golf League

This junior league provides an experience that involves 'game-like' situations in practice along with on-course play. The first introduction to the game of golf for most kids involves either a golf clinic at a range or going to the driving range. And although it may be fun to whack balls as hard as you can into a big field, this first experience with golf has very little to do with the game itself. Our junior league allows youngsters to experience the ups and downs of the game in the company of other children (typically friends) under the supervision of an experienced coach.

How do I register my child or find out more information?

The London Junior Golf Development Centre welcomes you and your family, regardless of experience or equipment, to start golfing this season. For more information or to register, visit us at www.londonjuniorgolf.com.

www.londonjuniorgolf.com

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canada life championship

MACKENZIE TOUR PGA TOUR CANADA

Canada Life Championship at Highland CC ready for Mackenzie Tour season

The Mackenzie Tour - PGA TOUR Canada is set to embark on its eighth season, with the first week of February signaling the release of the official 2020 schedule. As has been the case each of the past eight years, London will host the year's final event at which 10 players will earn status on the Korn Ferry Tour, the PGA TOUR's feeder circuit. For the sixth-consecutive season, Highland Country Club will host the festivities September 14-20.

Last year on the PGA TOUR, three players who have played the Canada Life Championship in the past picked up their first win on the World's biggest stage; Adam Long at the American Express Championship, Corey Conners at the Valero Texas Open and C.T. Pan at the RBC Heritage.

In total, there are 27 past Mackenzie Tour players competing on the PGA TOUR this season, including 2018 Mackenzie Tour Player of the Year Tyler McCumber and 2018 Canada Life Canadian Player of the Year, Michael Gligic, who eached played at Highland that season. Last year's Canada Life Canadian Player of the Year, Taylor Pendrith, is off to a hot start on the Korn Ferry Tour as he looks to join Canadian friends, and Mackenzie Tour alums, Mackenzie Hughes, Nick Taylor, Gligic and Conners on the PGA TOUR. Londonites will have the opportunity to play with potential PGA TOUR pros in September at the Canada Life Championship's annual pro-am. With 41 alums qualifying for the PGA TOUR since 2013, and 232 qualifying for the Korn Ferry Tour, the Mackenzie Tour is proving to be part of the the path to the PGA TOUR.

2019 Canada Life Canadian Player of the year Taylor Pendrith

FINAU TRIUMPHS AT PRESIDENTS CUP

Down four after 10 holes in his final singles match of the Presidents Cup, Mackenzie Tour alum Tony Finau knew he needed a late charge against Hideki Matsuyama to help propel the American team to victory. Thankfully for the Americans, Finau is no stranger to team competition. At the Ryder Cup in 2018, he was the one of four players donning Stars and Stripes to finish the event with a winning record.

"I couldn't give up on my teammates and my captains," Finau said after completing the come-from-behind halve to earn a much-needed half point.

"We were inspired to play for Tiger and with Tiger."

Tiger who? Tiger Woods, that's who.

Five-years removed from playing in front of Canadian crowds on the Mackenzie Tour, Finau played alongside a team captained by the most recognizable figure in golf history, helping them topple a talented International squad, featuring another past Mackenzie Tour grad; C.T. Pan. Recently, Finau finish runner-up at the Waste Management Phoenix Open and is poised for his best season yet. And it all started in Canada on the Mackenzie Tour.

For more information on how to get involved and support the local community, contact Highland Country Club

519-681-8223

Playing Captain Tiger Woods embraces teammate Tony Finau

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Sempai Spotlight: Emma Levy

Submitted by Family Karate Centres

Emma Levy began her training back in 2002, at the age of 5, with John Marshall at Family Karate. From her first day, Levy had a focus and drive beyond her years, listening intently to her instructors. Some instructors would comment that Emma was like a 'remote-controlled student.' You would tell her to do something, or to fix something, and she would do it! Levy sought to challenge herself by joining the competition team, and she went from competing at local and regional tournaments to national level tournaments by the age of nine.

In 2015, Levy traveled to Orlando to compete at the US Open, where she won her division. Then, she earned a runner-up position out of all divisional winners. Her competition career took her to tournaments in Sacramento, Washington, New York, Pittsburgh, and Chicago. She competed and trained while maintaining a high academic standard and earning acceptance into the engineering program at McMaster University in Hamilton. This did not stop her from training, as she went to Dublin in 2016 and 2017 to compete in the Irish Open – one of the largest sport martial arts tournaments in the world.

During this intense period of training, Levy still found time to act as a coach for the competition team at Family Karate, giving back to younger competitors. She is set to graduate in June from the Civil Engineering program at McMaster, where she has spent the past four summers helping to run and oversee STEM camps on campus.

Whatever the future brings, Levy will always take the lessons she learned at Family Karate with her as she forges ahead in her personal and professional life. Lessons like perseverance, dedication, compassion, and teamwork.

www.familykarate.ca

Emma Levy (green and black uniform) is one of numerous success stories for Family Karate, where the talented athlete began training, at the age of 5, back in 2002. Having competed locally, nationally and internationally for many years, Levy will graduate with a Civil Engineering degree from McMaster University in June – and her future is bright. Congratulations, Emma!

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Camps focused on skills and fun

Submitted by Olympic Karate

Summer will be here before we know it, so it's time for families to register for camps!

And don't forget about March Break camps and P.A. Day camps, too!

Here at Olympic Karate Academy, we have created a day camp that emphasizes focus, confidence and fitness in a fun setting. Campers make new friends, play games and activities, do Lego building, play board games, and take daily trips to the Oakridge Pool (weather permitting). Each day has a different theme or activity, and campers/students get an hour of karate instruction each day.

Our day camp is led by Master Sensei Steve Donovan, who has years of day camp leadership and experience. Master Steve has several junior leaders as helpers, assuring that there is a good camper-to-instructor ratio. Parents can have peace of mind knowing that their children are safe and having fun all day!

We also offer 'emergency day camp' days on teacher strike days. Please call ahead to ensure availability.

All youngsters have different skills and excel at varied things, and karate day camp welcomes everyone. You do not need to be a member of Olympic Karate Academy to attend our camps. For any questions, registration, or more information, please contact us at sensei@olympickarate.on.ca or 519-473-5444

www.olympickarate.on.ca

At Olympic Karate day camps, youngsters can expect days full of fun while they improve their karate skills, their focus, confidence and fitness, and meet new friends!

CAMP DATES

P.A. Day Camps
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March Break Camp
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Tiffany Johnston
Striker, 2019 Western Mustangs Soccer

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www.fowlerkennedy.com

Hard work paying off in Hardware

Submitted by Forest City Volleyball Club

Congratulations to all Forest City Volleyball Club (FCVC) athletes on an outstanding season of growth and success. With OVA Provincial Championships in April, we have seen all of the hard work that has taken place in the gyms to prepare throughout the winter and spring, and we look forward to watching all teams finish the season in top form!

Meanwhile, our ever-popular Acorn program for players aged 9 to 13 has been a tremendous success once again, with sold out Fall, Winter and Spring programs. Register now for 2020 Summer Camps to learn from the best! Visit us online.

FCVC's Draydon Cheng and Nathan Morelli were the recipients of the citywide 2019 'Mr. Volleyball' award!

FCVC's Rachel Gray was the recipient of the citywide 2019 'Ms. Volleyball' award! Join us in wishing Rachel good luck as she travels to France in March to compete with Team Ontario Elite!

FCVC 13U Evergreen won Gold medals at the 14U OVA Challenge Cup Championship tournament

FCVC 18U Methuselah won Gold medals at OVA McGregor Cup

FCVC 13U Cycad won Gold medals at OVA McGregor Cup

forestcityvolleyball.com | facebook: FCVCLondon | twitter: @go_fcvc | instagram: forestcityvolleyball

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FCVC 14U Rangers won Silver medals at OVA McGregor Cup

FCVC 17U Hyperion won Gold medals at OVA Challenge Cup

FCVC 13U Lorax won Gold medals at OVA McGregor Cup

FCVC 17U Cypress won Gold medals at OVA McGregor Cup

FCVC 15U Aspen won Bronze medals at OVA McGregor Cup (Fierce game faces!)

FCVC 15U Kauri won Bronze medals at OVA McGregor Cup

FCVC 17U Helios won Gold medals at OVA Challenge Cup

FCVC 14U Mahogany played up at 15U OVA McGregor Cup Trillium and captured Bronze medals!

Athletes and travel consent

WALK-IN NOTARY

Submitted by Walk-In Notary

It's that time of year again when many of us will be planning vacations – including for March break. There are many things to sort out, but you may not know about one of the most important things to consider: travel consent letters. If your child is travelling outside of Canada without both parents (i.e. either alone or with only one parent), the government of Canada recommends obtaining a travel consent letter.

With increasing concern about human trafficking and custodial rights, customs officials in both Canada and the United States look for consent to travel letters to confirm parental permission to travel. From past personal experience, even athletes traveling as a team (and only months or weeks away from the age of eighteen) have been asked to produce a consent to travel letter when crossing without their parents into the United States for tournaments.

At Walk-In Notary, we are happy to assist you with drafting or notarizing your consent to travel letter (or both). We are open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm, and no appointment is necessary. You can download a consent to travel form from the Government of Canada's website at: https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/children/consent-letter.

If you use the above form, simply fill out the information and bring it into our office to sign and have it notarized. Please bring valid photo identification with you. The cost to notarize a consent to travel form is $39.95 plus HST. If you would like us to draft the consent to travel letter, the cost (including notarization) is $69.99 plus HST. If you mention the Promo Code "SportsXpress", you will receive a $10 discount for drafting or notarizing a letter of consent to travel at Walk-In Notary!

If you have a full team of minor athletes travelling without parents and would like us to notarize the entire team's forms or letters at once, please give us a call at 226-977-8245.

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- Volleyball instruction geared towards competitive club players
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- Location is Fanshawe College, air conditioned courts!
- Fee: $340 per session
- Camp Director: Lloyd Rumble
- Date: July 13-16, 9am-3pm

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- Volleyball instruction geared towards competitive club setters
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- Fee: $85
- Camp Director: Lloyd Rumble
- Date: July 17

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- Volleyball instruction and touches throughout the summer
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- Fee: $40 for all nine sessions
- Camp Director: Lloyd Rumble

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Diving into spring!

Submitted by Forest City Diving Club

The Forest City Diving Club's Aspire Invitational was held in London on January 25 and 26. FCDC had 17 divers compete during the weekend event, against clubs from across Ontario. It was the first event of the year for our provincial level athletes, and they competed on 1m, 3m and platform events in their age groups. The divers, who have been practicing under the guidance of their coaches all winter, collected an impressive 27 medals over the two-day event. Congratulations to all divers!

While diving is an individual sport, divers train together, support and encourage each other, and cheer their team mates on. The benefits of this sport are life lasting – friendships, travel, self-confidence and team spirit is amazing.

Aspire Invitational – C Girls

FCDC's March break camp is a great opportunity for children to try diving. The camp is run at the Canada Games Aquatic Centre, where children do dryland training and are in the water twice a day (mornings and afternoons). Between pool sessions, the camp leaders lead the young divers in various activities and sports. Please visit our website at www.forsestcitydiving.com for more information about our March Break camp – and all the other FCDC offerings, including summer camps, too!

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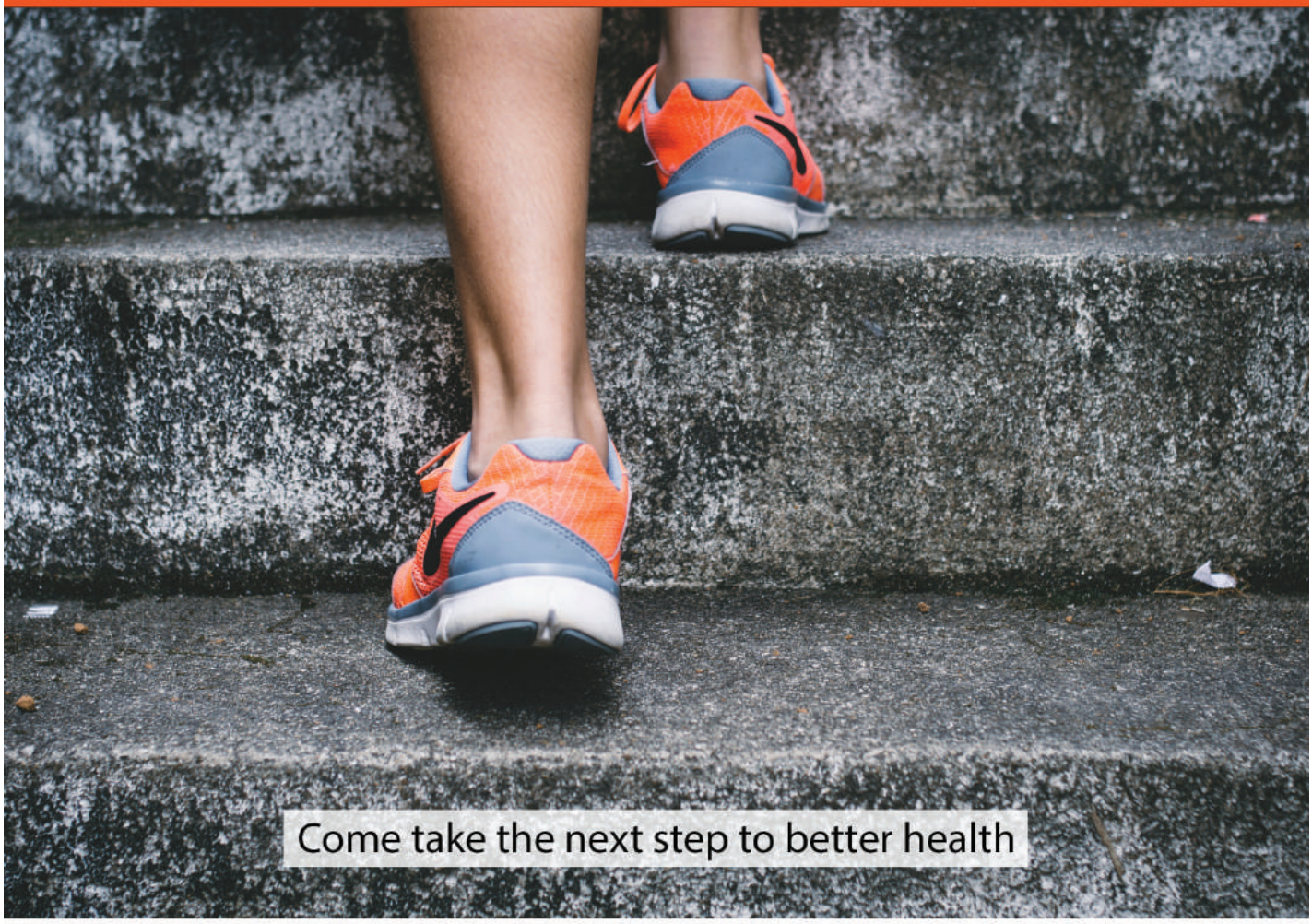

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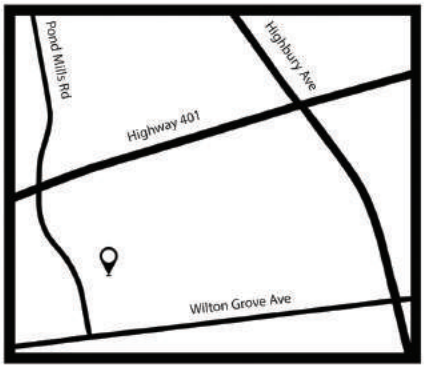

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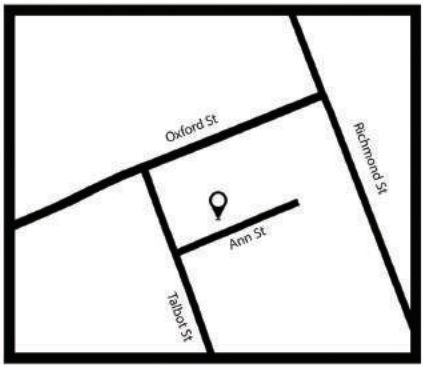

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Balling for a good cause

Submitted by the London Lightning

The 2019-20 London Lightning annual 'Shine the Light on Woman's Abuse' Purple Game, in partnership with the London Abused Woman's Centre, is scheduled for the final home game of the season, Saturday, April 4. Donning their signature purple jerseys, the Lightning will take on the visiting Island Storm on one of the busiest game nights of the season.

This year marks the 20th year of the Shine the Light campaign by the London Abused Woman's Centre, which puts a spotlight on the issue of men's violence against women. The colour purple is used to signify courage, survival, and honour.

The London Abused Woman's Centre (LWAC) and the London Lightning have been partnering on their annual campaign every year since the team's inception in 2011. Yearly, the Lighting swap their yellow home kits for custom purple jerseys, which are auctioned off in support of the campaign. Fans are able to place bids on their favourite player's jersey at a silent auction table set up in the concourse during the game.

In a special ceremony prior to tip-off, Budweiser Gardens will cut the lights, allowing fans to shine a light, whether it's their phone or some other device, to show solidarity with the campaign. The LWAC will also have a video played before the game to spread awareness.

The Lightning are requesting that those planning on being in attendance wear purple in support of the Shine the Light campaign.

Make sure to keep an eye on Lightning social media and our website (www.lightningbasketball.ca) in the coming weeks for news about playoff tickets!

www.lightningbasketball.ca

The London Lightning held a record of 12-6 through their first 18 games this season, placing them first in the Central Division as of late February. The regular season continues until late April, and then it's playoff time.

The Lightning are happy once again to partner with the London Abused Woman's Centre for the annual 'Shine the Light on Woman's Abuse' game on April 4. The players will wear purple jerseys for the special occasion (and fans are encouraged to wear purple, too!).

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Basketball and the barbershop

Contributions by Nathanael Morris-Mckenzie

Nathanael (far right) along with teammates and coaches during pregame (left to right): Coach Tony, Coach Jon, Coach Greg, Marco, D'andre, Judah, John, and Nathanael.

United Kutz and sports go hand-in-hand. The barbershop's owner, Kwami Lambert, has had a passion for sports his whole life, and he's also a proud supporter of local sports teams and organizations. He also employs athletes – including Nathanael Morris-Mckenzie, a member of the Fanshawe Falcons basketball team.

On the court, Nathanael, who has spent three seasons with the Falcons, is a speedy forward with a lot of athleticism. Off the court, he's one of the guys down at United Kutz, where he's been cutting hair for the last two years.

"I love working with the guys. It's an entertaining place, and the job keeps you busy," says Nathanael, who first began cutting his friends' hair five or six years ago – primarily for his basketball teammates, Mohammed, Christopher and Dre. "Those guys helped me excel in my skills, doing whatever I wanted to their hair and designs and everything."

Since then, he's gained more professional experience – thanks to the barbers at United Kutz, where he began work two years ago.

"They taught me even more to make me a better barber," Nathanael says.

Away from the barbershop, he's at school, studying Auto Body Repair Techniques. And, of course, playing basketball for the Falcons, who enjoyed an eight-game winning streak and went 9-2 during the first half of the college season, good for second place in the league. Just like in the barbershop, Nathanael is always looking to improve on the court.

"I think I need to work on my skillset and increase my basketball IQ," the 6-foot-3 forward says. "My goals are to stick to what I can do and know my role. I think our team will go far this year. We play our hardest no matter who we're playing against. Our goal is to always outwork our opponent."

Nathanael is no stranger to hard work. And that goes for in the barbershop, too. And just like on the basketball court, his teammates at the shop are all working towards the same goal and supporting each other.

Says Nathanael: "I'm just thankful to Kwami for giving me the opportunity to work alongside him and his team."

www.unitedkutz.com

The Fanshawe Falcons basketball team (and some supporters), including (left to right): Mason, Marco, Coach Greg, Adrian, Coach Dave, Joan (Nathanael's grandmother), Junior, Aldin, D'andre, Alfred, Sariya (Nathanael's little cousin), Nathanael, Zachary, and Hannani.

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Reaching socialization milestones

Submitted by The Little Gym of London

If your child attends classes at The Little Gym, it won't take you long to realize that we are about a lot more than just sports and gymnastics. More than half of our students are under the age of 4. For these younger ages, our professionally-designed curriculum, which has been developed and honed for over 30 years, focuses on social development of the child through the fun environment of learning a sport.

A few of these milestones that our curriculum is based around are as follows:

Age 1: Begin basic communication, recognize familiar people, and interact with you.

Age 2: Begin to socialize, defend territory, and extend relationships to other people.

Age 3: Seek out others, use their imagination, and begin to understand emotions.

Age 4: Show interest in being part of a group, start to share and cooperate with others, be affectionate, and exert more independence.

The first four years of life is a crucial time to lay the foundation of socialization. At The Little Gym, our mission is to facilitate socialization of young children so that they have the necessary skills in this area to advance successfully in future activities. At the London, Ontario location of The Little Gym, we have been helping children and families with this for 15 years, and we have seen thousands of children over that time. We love what we do! And just so you don't think we are only about young children, our grade school gymnastics and dance programs are going strong for ages 6 to 12!

Wondering what is happening at The Little Gym during the months of March and April?

- We are enrolling for Summer Camps! Full-day, full weeks for ages 4 to 9; and half-day school prep programs for children entering kindergarten for the first time in September 2020.
- We are enrolling for Summer Classes! Summer session is June 27 through September 4.
- Our students are preparing for Show Week routines, which happen the week of June 13-19.
- We have new The Little Gym Dance Studio classes (Tap & Ballet or Hip Hop/Jazz Funk)
- Early Bird registration is happening for our Fall 2020 classes from Apr. 25 to May 8 for currently enrolled members (and will start on May 9 for everyone else).

We are located in Sherwood Forest Mall, and we would love for you to stop by, or visit us at www.tlglondoncan.com, or call us at 519-642-0660. Downloadable copies of all our schedules are available on our website. We hope to hear from you soon!

www.tlglondoncan.com

The Little Gym of London is focused on providing young children with skills that they'll carry with them for the rest of their lives. For children ages 4 and under, the goal is to reach socialization milestones – while having a lot of fun!

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Wonderful winter for local gymnasts

Submitted by London Beje Gymnastics Club

Activities started early this year at Beje Gymnastics Club, as competitive athletes had their first competitions of the 2020 season at the beginning of February.

Artistic gymnastics was up first, as the girls competed in Milton at the 'Bring on the Sun' qualifier meet for all athletes in the Provincial stream from (Levels 6-10). Valentina DaCosta and Joelle Cheng, two Level 6 athletes, went out and fought the nerves of the competition.

"We started on Uneven Bars, and I was a little nervous." Said Joelle. "But by Vault, the last event, I felt good and I was really happy to come in first place and win the gold medal."

Said Coach Alana of the event: "It was a tough competition with lots of good girls out there, but I'm happy with our girls' performance, especially with the gold on Vault. Now, we need to go back to work harder and be ready for the next meets the rest of the season."

Tumbling athletes also had their second Ontario Cup competition in early February (Feb. 7-9) in Niagara, and they brought home two silver medals on the Men's side, with Jacob Burns (Level 5 National stream) and Dominic Palin (Level 1 Provincial stream) achieving the feat.

"Being the youngest athlete in the competition, I had nothing to loss," said Dominic. "So, I went there and did my best."

Men's artistic had their second Ontario Cup as well, but in Kitchener this time. As predicted, all Beje athletes did a wonderful job, and after achieving the qualifier scores for the Ontario Championships, they can now push for higher and harder difficulties at their upcoming meets.

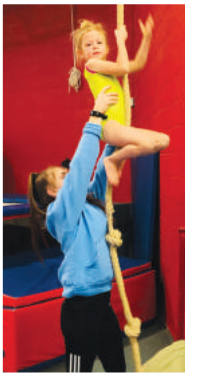
January was the month for new beginnings, and it kicked off a 15-week Winter Session for the Recreational program at Beje Gymnastics, with plenty of activities, including: 'I love Gymnastics week'; the 'Bring a friend' program, and in-house awards which showed the progress and improvements that the many gymnasts have made.

Registration for the Spring & Summer Session recreational program are now open, as well as for Summer Camps (and March Break, too!)

For more information, visit our website at www.londonbejegymnastics.com or phone us at 519-777-5208.

Beje Gymnastics is wishing everyone a 2020 full of happiness and success at all levels!

londonbejegymnastics.com



Beje Gymnastics Club consists of both competitive and recreational gymnasts who strive to improve their skills and have a lot of fun along the way!

Sydney Weiss (left) participating for the first time as a competitive coach, helping athlete Ella Otterbein.

Athlete Dominic Palin (left) with Coach Nick Bejenaru

Posing for a photo at competition (left to right): Nick Bejenaru, Joelle Cheng, Valentina DaCosta and Alana Parr

Jacob Burns (left) of Beje Gymnastics on the podium

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Gymnasts progress through program

Contributed by Beth White

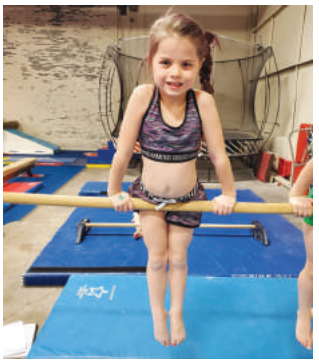
At the Forest City Gymnastics Club (FCGC), the Novice Girls Levels 3-5 program consists of gymnasts aged 8 to 10 who follow the CANGYM program, which is Gymnastics Canada's National skill development and evaluation program. Participants just starting out are added into classes based on their age. Then, once they are in the program, they are moved through the CANGYM program based on the levels they have achieved.

FCGC runs four sessions of Recreational Gymnastics each year. In the Fall, the session is typically is 15 weeks long, while the Winter and Spring sessions are 12 weeks long and the Summer session is nine weeks in length. It is during these classes where gymnasts work through the CANGYM program. Each of the 12 levels of the program have 20 specific skills that each gymnast works on to complete in order to move to the next level.

"FCGC works with each child based on their own individual abilities and helps to create successful goals throughout the weeks of every session," says Beth White, a Recreational program director at FCGC.

Each child varies in what they find difficult, says White. Most children love the bars but may have difficulty in doing some of the bar skills due the amount of arm and stomach strength required. The beam can be difficult for some, as it is a narrow 6-inch wide beam and stands much higher than floor level.

"It can be a bit intimidating at first, but it becomes easier as children begin to learn self confidence," says White.



Forest City Gymnastics Club (FCGC) provides youngsters with the opportunity to learn the sport while moving through a skill development and evaluation program. Here, Genevieve Otterman works on her skills on different pieces of equipment, including the bars with a friend.

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What's the first thing children learn when joining the program? Often, it's the cartwheel. Some children can simply watch someone else do a cartwheel and perform the move themselves no problem. However, others can have difficulty with their body alignment and knowing where their legs are in comparison to their body as they try to complete a cartwheel.

Everyone loves the trampoline or tumbltrak, White says, and it's one of the activities that all FCGC participants get to do every time they come to class. Children love to bounce and learn new skills in a safe environment, and the trampoline allows children to learn new skills while also learning body awareness and self control along the way.

"Joining a gymnastics program is a great foundation for any sport," says White. "Gymnastics helps develop flexibility, strength, discipline, co-ordination, goal orientation, self confidence, and creativity, as well as positive self-esteem!"

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Cheering diversity and opportunity

Submitted by CheerStrike

Cheer is truly for everyone. Meet Charlie Appleton and Brady DeMelo: a pair of 10-year-old boys who are thriving in a sport often thought to be only for girls. Like all other boys their age, Charlie and Brady are full of energy. And, like many other boys, they've found a sport they love.

"Being a boy in cheer makes me feel unique," says Charlie when asked why he loves cheer. "I am proud of my accomplishments and how strong I am. I like cheer a lot. It doesn't matter to me that I'm a boy, or to my family, my team and my coaches."

Brady shares similar sentiments.

"I love cheer because you get to meet new friends and travel to competitions," the young cheer athlete said. "It is fun being part of a team. We work really hard together on our routines."

Charlie Appleton (left) and Brady DeMelo, two CheerStrike athletes, both competed at the Cheer Evolution Big East Blast competition in Ottawa in early February.

At CheerStrike, we pride ourselves in offering programs which allow anyone who loves this sport to participate. We also believe that every parent should get to watch their children participating in something that brings out their best selves.

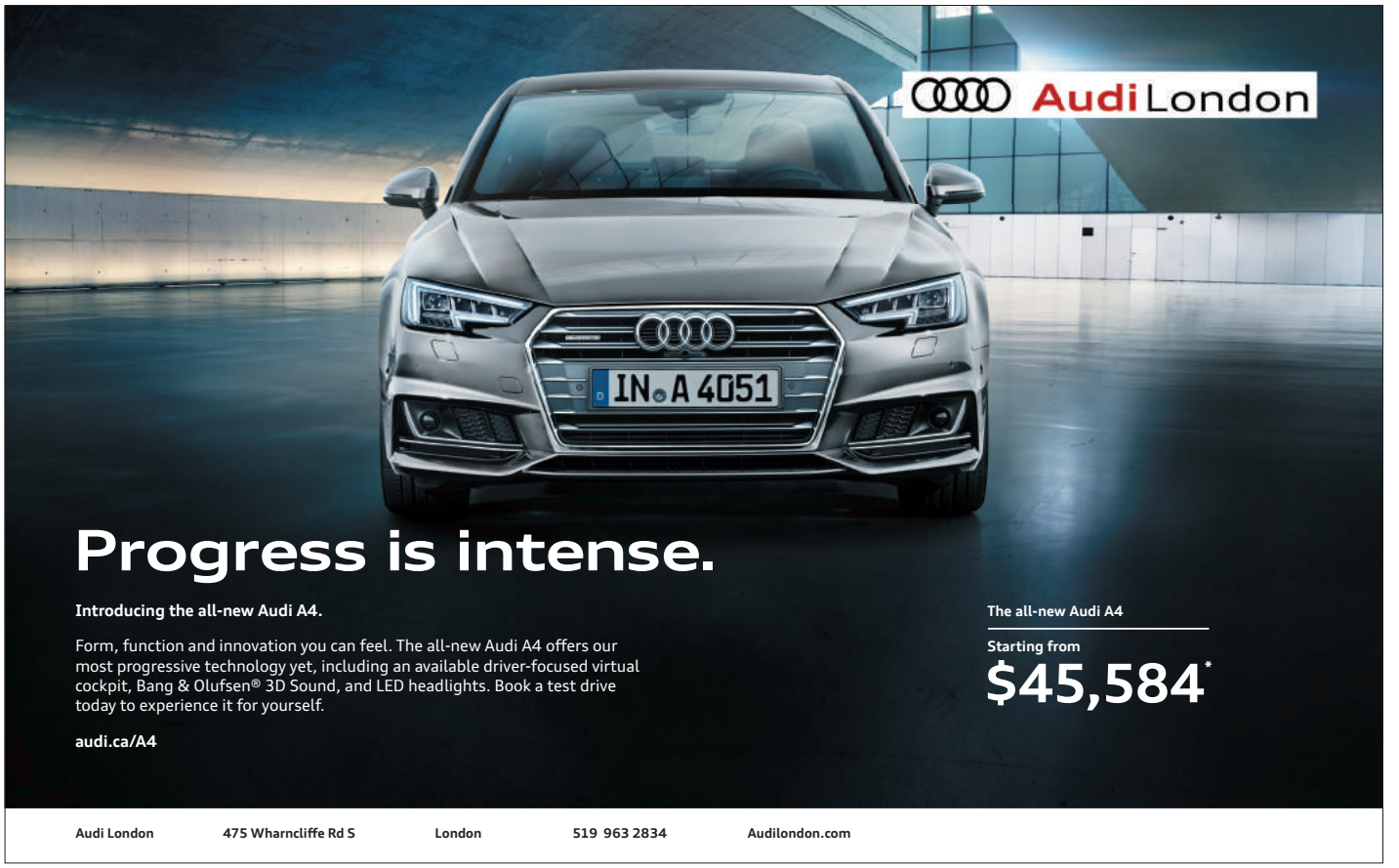
Explain Brady's parents, Aimee and Justin: "It is such a joy to watch Brady perform with his team. We are so proud of him for having the courage to do the sport he loves!"

Likewise, Kim and Jeff, Charlie's parents, love seeing their son supported in doing what he loves.

"Cheer gives us the opportunity to see Charlie engaging in a sport that he loves and that makes him happy," they say. "In his spare time, what he likes to do for fun is create routines to music. And being a part of cheer allows him to experience this with a larger, supportive group."

Come find out why there is so much to love at CheerStrike!

www.cheerstrikeroyals.com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Nothing better than the real thing

Submitted by Power Cheer Gym

In early January, Netflix launched the 6-part docuseries entitled 'Cheer,' which follows the ups and downs of the Navarro College cheerleading team as they prepare for the US Nationals. Its popularity has been massive across streaming, mainstream and social media platforms. Although a wee bit over the top at times, it offers an interesting view of cheer, and we at the Power Cheer Gym (PCG) expect to see a surge in interest in our sport over the next six months.

Here are some compressed notes on what is real, what is edited for TV, and what the heck they are talking about…

Making Mat. This means 'being in the starting line-up,' as it were, when the team goes onto the mat to compete. Unlike the TV show, EVERY athlete at PCG 'Makes Mat' for every competition.

Coaches Don't Sit. In the real world, cheer coaches are on the mat with the athletes during practice – spotting, lifting, guiding and teaching in a very hands-on and active role. The TV coach? Chair, boots, iPad and lovely hair. No.

Bumps and Bruises. The TV show seems obsessed with injuries and contrived drama created when the athlete affected may be bumped off the performance group because of it. Keep in mind that the show compresses 10 months of filming into a 6-hour series and that while, yes, injuries do happen in every sport, the TV timeline is wildly excessive.

All PCG coaches stress safety and proper progression of skills, and every team is acutely aware of safety regulations and guidelines and actively strives to always be injury-free. Bottom line? TV is not real life.

Jerry. The show features one particularly 'expressive' team member named Jerry. He is infectiously over-the-top positive/supportive and energetic – almost to the point of being unreal. He quickly became an internet meme, as well as a guest on the Ellen DeGeneres show, and 'Be A Jerry' has become a thing. Is he real? Yes. Is he realistic? You can decide. But the main thing is – every gym has a Jerry or two who will build up your child and bind teams together. While our respective Jerrys may never be guests of Ellen at the Oscars, they will ensure that your kid(s) are enjoying the sport.

Spring Tryouts

The Power Cheer Gym spring tryouts happen in May, but we encourage all potential future cheer athletes to contact the gym and drop by for a walkthrough and to meet the staff. Phone 519-667-0565 or email pcg@powercheergym.com for specific dates, times and age groupings. It is never too early to come visit or to get started!

www.powercheergym.com

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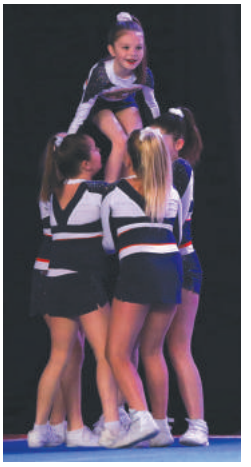
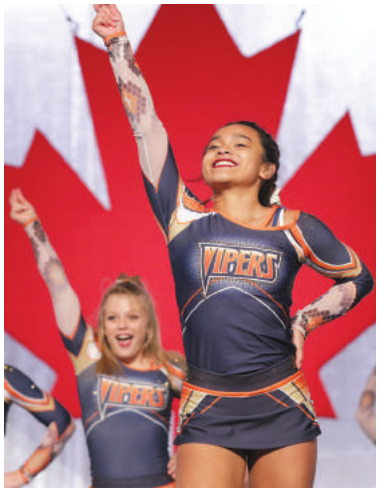
Teamwork, trust, strength and coordination are built in pyramids



Cheer relies on friends who elevate each other – physically and socially

Even the young 'Minis' build strength and confidence through teamwork



Cheer builds confidence and personal strength across all age groups

The athletic requirements of Cheer allow all sizes and body types to be valued

Performing on the big stage in packed arenas – it's just plain fun!

From idea to award-winning costumes

Submitted by Dancewear Plus

"Where an idea is a magical beginning."

It's the heartfelt slogan that continues to be a mainstay of Dancewear Plus after 21 years. Although the retail part of the business is strong, vibrant and growing, the backbone of the business is the Cut and Sew. It was the passion for custom costuming, after all, that gave Anne Perron the confidence and drive to open up Dancewear Plus, a retail store offering body wear, shoes and accessories for dancers and gymnasts.

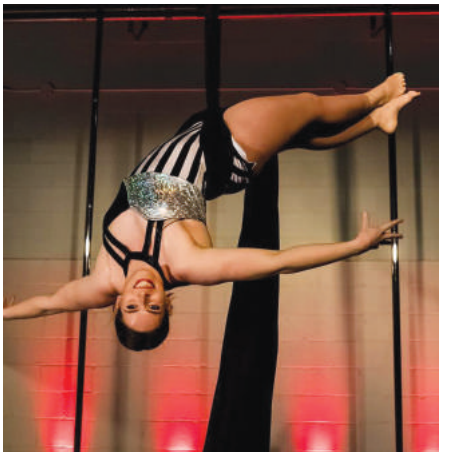
Even after 21 years, what still sets the store apart from any other in southwestern Ontario is the on-site cut and sew. Custom costuming for skating, dance, gymnastics, ballroom … the list goes on. Even off-the-rack body wear has been transformed and embellished by our knowledgeable staff to achieve the look needed!

The process is not only exciting for the client, but it's still exciting for Anne. To go from a sketch or a photo to the finished product is an amazing journey. Anne works with her clients by listening, sketching and transforming their ideas into a garment that works for them – while choosing the colors and fabrics to bring things to life. Athletes come in all shapes and sizes, and they need to feel comfortable and confident in what they are wearing. We hear so many times, "This is the most comfortable costume. I love it!"

Many of our clients share with us that they've been given costume awards for our work. As exciting as that is for us, it still can't match the satisfaction of seeing the genuine smile on their faces when they emerge from the change room wearing their new costume that we have created together. No words can describe it! And that is magical!

www.dancewearplus.ca

Dance Factor Studio



Dancewear Plus has been creating costumes for skating, dance, gymnastics, and so much more for over two decades, all while providing clients with personalized care.

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Boys and dance

By Richelle Hirlehey for Dance Extreme

Dance is essentially another form of expression. For many young boys, however, properly expressing themselves can be a difficult task. But mastering a routine – and being able to perform that routine in front of an audience – gives boys the confidence they need to feel comfortable in social situations and to feel genuine respect for the other boys and girls that they dance with.

All of the regular benefits of dance that apply to girls also apply to boys. In addition to improved concentration and focus, increased gross motor skills, a boosting of one's self-confidence and improved physical fitness, dance also encourages self-expression. Being able to poignantly transmit artistic intention is something available to all dancers. Having advanced technique, discipline, and dedication allows a dancer to use dance itself as a language with which to communicate.

Dance Extreme understands that boys move differently than girls, and that boys are hardwired to explore gross motor movements differently than girls. They enjoy the physicality of dance and friendly competition in their classes.

> "[Boys] enjoy the physicality of dance and friendly competition in their classes."

Sitting down with two Dance Extreme boys who dance competitively, we discovered that, for them, dance provides personal fulfilment. When you pursue a hobby or passion, it must give us a special sense of purpose and meaning.

"I dance because I like it, and I make great friends here," says Ryan Dodge, 12, who has been dancing at Dance Extreme for the past seven years – with an additional year before joining the studio. "Everyone is supportive of each other, and I'm lucky I have the opportunity to dance because a lot of people cannot."

Another aspiring dancer, 9-year-old Michael Antaran, loves dancing and puts his heart and soul into all of the styles in which he trains. Antaran says that he dances "because it's fun and I get to make friends, and everyone is nice."

Not only is it fun, but both boys enjoy the physicality of dance. Both Dodge and Antaran were first introduced to the studio as young brothers watching their older sisters in dance classes and performing on stage.

If you are considering dance for your son or grandson, here are a few things to consider: Dance Extreme recommends watching a class or two, as it allows you to observe the styles of dance and the method by which children are instructed. There are many different styles of dance, including ballet, jazz, hip hop, tap, break-dancing and so forth. Try to gauge if your son would be most comfortable learning a more formal style or whether they would excel at freestyling. There is no right answer, and it is fine for a child to attempt different styles until they find their ideal one.

Dance Extreme offers trial classes throughout the year and during the summer months. We offer drop-in or Fall & Winter session classes, which are a great way to try out different styles. Take advantage of these opportunities to see how your son reacts.

While playing sports may be a major part of our boys' lives, we should also encourage them to enjoy the many creative, social and emotional joys of dance. Giving them an opportunity to dance – and the confidence to enjoy it – is a gift that will last them a lifetime.

www.danceextreme.com

Nine-year-old Michael Antaran (left) and 12-year-old Ryan Dodge are two boys who enjoy all the physical, mental and emotional benefits of dance while also getting the opportunity to express themselves while training at Dance Extreme.

Dance helps pro athletes including Kobe Bryant

Contributions by Donna Bayley
Photos by Danielle Perelman Photography and Fred's Photography

Toronto Raptors guards Kyle Lowry and Matt Thomas made their dance debut this past December with the National Ballet of Canada's production of The Nutcracker. Those efforts were in part comic relief, as the Raptor teammates had no training and served as celebrity guests. But there is a history of professional athletes having been trained in dance – including one future Hall of Fame basketball player.

After the recent tragic death of Kobe Bryant, who died in a helicopter crash along with his daughter and seven other passengers, Dance Magazine noted that tap dance had played a part in Kobe Bryant's training. The legendary Laker, in fact, took tap dance lessons with the aim of strengthening his ankles after suffering a sprained ankle in the 2000 NBA finals. This wasn't public knowledge, and Bryant said that it was "kept secret for obvious reasons."

Bryant couldn't just walk into a dance store and purchase size 14 tap shoes. Rather, he had them custom made. In Bryant's autobiography, 'The Mamba Mentality: How I Play,' he describes how tap lessons helped to keep him free from injury. In 2018, Bryant spoke with late night host Jimmy Kimmel about how he walked into a dance studio filled with young students' questioning looks, but that he persevered, and it aided his game.

Dance, which has even benefited professional athletes in sports like basketball and football, offers numerous benefits, including improved balance, flexibility, fitness and overall improved health and wellbeing.

It has also been reported, over the years, that ballet has helped many football players, as well, to improve their balance, flexibility and cross training to effectively help their game. It is well known that Heisman Trophy winner Herschel Walker, who starred in the 1980s and 90s, took ballet lessons to become a better all-round athlete. Lynn Swann, a Pro Football Hall of Fame wide receiver, recognized the benefits of ballet even before that (Swann starred in the 1970s and early 80s).

Former running back Eddie George, another Heisman Trophy winner who was a standout in the late 1990s and early 2000s, was also a proponent of ballet, while current 300-pound New York Jets tackle Steve McLendon has also enjoyed the benefits of ballet.

What's happening at Dance Steps?

Dance Steps offers tap, ballet and other dance forms that should be investigated to improve overall fitness, conditioning, flexibility and strength. Upcoming programs include...

March 23 to June 11 (12 weeks)

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- Latin Street Funk (Tues. 7:15-8:00pm) - $135
- Tap with Experience (Wed. 8:30-9:30pm) - $180
- Ballet Beginner (Thurs. 7:15-8:15pm) - $180
- Tap Beginner (Thursdays 7:45-8:30pm) - $135

Preschool Program (12 weeks):

- Wed. (4:30 - 5:00pm) or Sun. (2:30 - 3:00pm) - $145 including HST

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Carpet bowling draws a crowd

Contributions by Kiwanis Seniors' Community Centre

The Kiwanis Seniors' Community Centre is helping older adults in the London community lead healthier, more active, and more socially-engaged lives. How? By offering a wide variety of activities and events that are fun and fulfilling. The benefits? Better health and overall wellness – physically, spiritually, intellectually, socially and emotionally.

The Centre offers numerous programs, including fitness and exercise classes (including for people with osteoporosis), yoga, ballroom dancing, darts, shuffleboard, billiards, cards, craft programs, ceramics, and choir, to name a few. Londoners can also participate in seminars on nutrition, complementary therapies, and other wellness-related topics.

One particularly popular activity at the Kiwanis Seniors' Community Centre is carpet bowling, which takes place every Thursday throughout the year. Much like outdoor lawn bowling, the name of the game is to get as many bowls closest to the jack to score the most points.

Elna Kelly is the volunteer coordinator who organizes the game at the Kiwanis Seniors' Centre, and she's been in charge for the last nine years. At times, Kelly may see as many as 18 players come out for carpet bowling action – playing on three different courts.

Participants say they have a lot of fun playing the game at the Seniors' Centre, as it provides the opportunity both to get some exercise and to enjoy a social outing. What are some of the keys to the game? Since the ball is weighted on one side, it curls after it is thrown, and this needs to be taken into account. Players say that balance and weight control when throwing is important, as is accuracy, of course. And finally, it's important to have patience when trying to score.

Getting ready for a match – back row (left to right): Donna, Bruce, Brian, Dennis, Les and Elna. Seated: Carlos and Helen

Dale (left) and Bob in action

Bill (left) and Bruce enjoy a friendly game

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Dragonflies swarm the ice

Contributions by Lynne Finlay

They are the Dragonflies, and they're a unique synchronized skating team made up of athletes from a variety of local clubs. Based out of the North Dorchester Skating Club, the Dragonflies have grown from one team to three teams, and now invite skaters from Embro, Norwich, Ingersoll, Brantford, Thamesford, and Dorchester.

The three synchronized skating teams, which each include eight to 16 figure skaters (both male and female) include Beginner 2 (ages 12 & Under), Elementary (ages 10 to 13) and a more competitive Juvenile team (ages 10 to 13).

"Our skaters' commitment and dedication to the sport, and the support of our families are our biggest strength," says Lynne Finlay, who coaches the Dragonflies along with Lindsay Ketchabaw. "We have really built a supportive skating community. Figure skating is an individual sport, but synchronized skating gives our athletes opportunities to work as a team for a common goal!"

The Dragonflies skate once per week at the Ingersoll and Dorchester community centres, and the skaters also participate in other skating activities with their home clubs during the week. Many members of the team are 'Learn to Skate' program assistants, where they volunteer their time to help with the next generation of skaters. Many Dragonflies are also active in solo competitions and Skate Canada Star Program tests.

"Our skaters work on dance, free skate, and skills, as well as synchronized skating," says Finlay. "We prepare skaters to develop their self confidence and performance skills, and we give our teams every opportunity to perform and work together with new challenges that will help develop lifelong skills."

Besides skating in competitions across southwestern Ontario, where all three teams have accomplished personal bests this season, the Dragonflies have performed at London Knights hockey games (in front of 9,000 fans), as well as for the Dorchester Dolphins and in local Carnival Ice Shows. Each year the Club also does themed performances, and this year it is Riverdance (to recognize the 25th anniversary of its creation).

"We had the great support and assistance of Nora Corrigan, from the Corrigan Irish School of Dance to make our programs authentic!" said Finlay.

In competition, Finlay says, the overall goal for the Dragonflies is to improve upon the score of the previous skate.

"We perform the same program each competitive event during the course of one season, and we are always learning new elements in order to make the program more difficult as the season progresses. Our Juvenile team beat their first competition score and posted a new personal best by FIVE points!"

Interested in joining the Dragonflies synchronized skating team? Contact skatendsc@gmail.com.

Beginner 2 Dragonflies (holding photos of Elvis Stojko sending us his best wishes!). Back row (left to right): Lynne Finlay (coach), Emelyn Fletcher, Ayla Hainer, Evelyn McKenzie, Austin Mouland. Front row: Abigail Baker, Sofia Silva, Alexandra Galadja, Matayah Hinz, Lindsay Ketchabaw (Coach)

The Elementary Dragonflies. Back row (left to right): Lynne Finlay (coach), Ayla Hainer, Sukhmeet Randhawa, Hannah Forrest, Rachel Richard, Carly Arthur; Front row: Jenny Hutchison, Austin Mouland, Violet Weaver, Sophie Joiner, Evelyn McKenzie, Lindsay Ketchabaw (coach)

The Elementary Dragonflies getting ready to compete

Bronze medal winners at the Bert Winfield Competition on Feb. 15, 2020. (left to right): Lindsay Ketchabaw (coach), Bella Weaver, Julia Bachert, Carly Arthur, Lauren Teves-Machado, Rachel Richard, Mr. Bert Winfield, Emily Visser, Samantha Hutchinson, Hayleigh Mattson, Erin Plaquet, Lynne Finlay (coach)

The girls celebrate after competing and receiving personal best scores!

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Lynx eyeing provincials

Submitted by London Lynx

The London Lynx U19 AA Ringette team is made up of a group of talented, smart and determined young ladies aged 16 to 18 from London and area. As the season has progressed, these young ladies have continued to work hard on and off the ice, with one to two practice ice times throughout the week and additional games and tournaments on weekends.

The ladies have also spent time in the gym, working on off-ice training for strength, agility and cardio, which has helped to improve their performance on the ice. The team has traveled around Ontario this year to participate in tournaments. At the time of this writing, the Lynx had competed in three tournaments and played 15 league games, as well, placing them 3rd in their division within Ringette Ontario.

As the season winds down, the girls continue to work hard with a big goal in mind – winning a Provincial Championship in March. The girls will head to Richmond Hill to take on some of the best teams from around Ontario, with the winner not only earning the gold medal but also claiming a spot at the 2020 Canada Ringette Championships hosted in Ottawa.

Everyone involved with the Lynx is excited to see what the rest of the season has in store for the team. With continuous support from parents, family, friends, coaches and teammates, anything is possible!

www.londonringette.com

The London Lynx U19 AA Ringette Team
Players include: Abby Rodgers, Ainsleigh Wedow, Audrey Mackay-Barr, Ayton Johnston, Elle Bickford, Erika Neubrand, Jenna Deck, Josie Butler-Watson, Julia Harmer, Laura Dayman, Riley Workentin, Sarah Oozeer, Sarah Smith, Sierra Farmer, Sierra Scott, Sydney Lawrence and Tatem Eastman. Bench staff includes: Corry Barr, Courtney Janmatt, Laura Neubrand, Melissa Ryan, Scott Borland and Tom Watson.

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Hard work, support key for keeper

Contributions by Monet Edwards

Gabriel Taherie, a West London Hawks Minor Bantam MD goalie, knows it takes hard work to get to the next level. And he's ready – thanks in large part to his work ethic and a great group of coaches.

Taherie has participated in many camps and received instruction and private lessons from former NHL goalie Steve McKichan, as well as Jason Van Spronsen at Future Pro.

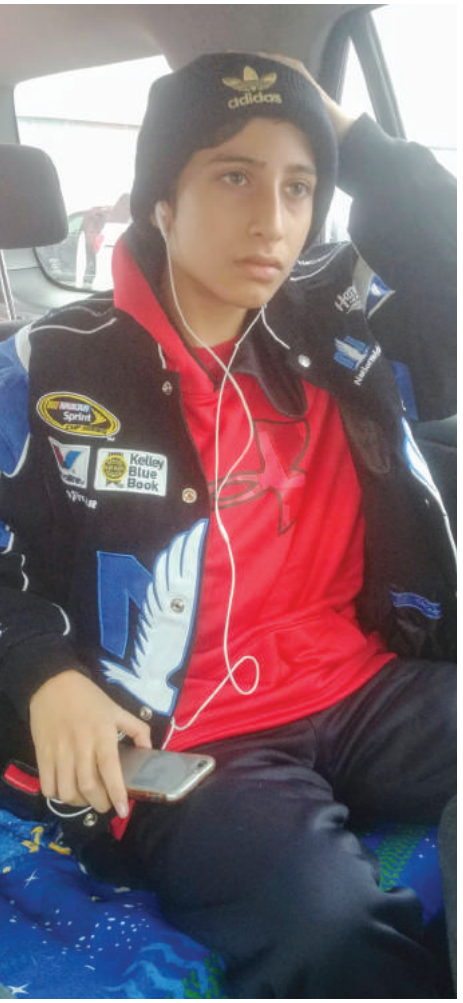
"Gabriel is a very talented young goalie who always works extremely hard when we are on the ice together," says Van Spronsen. "I can tell he loves the position – not only from his work ethic but also his willingness to help others by volunteering at some of my clinics throughout the season. I look forward to continuing to work with him."

Gabriel also regularly trains at Dahan Goaltending School, and the youngster says that he loves the fact that they push him, which gets the best out of him and makes him a better keeper.

"Gabriel takes the adversity of being a goaltender very well," says Nick Dahan. "When our training becomes difficult, he exhibits positivity. He doesn't let obstacles impede his success."

Meanwhile, Gabriel's dryland coach, former NCAA goalie Treyvan Jones, is also keen on the young goalie's work ethic and desire.

"Gabriel has always shown a hunger to improve," says Jones. "His coachability will allow him to reach beyond his ceiling, achieving even greater things in hockey than his expectations."



Gabriel Taherie, a talented goaltender Bantam-aged goalie, is focused on working hard and improving all areas of his game while he learns from some high-quality coaches and instructors.

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Ice Dawgs instilling love for game

Contributions by Kim Kearns
Photo by David McKittrick Photography

It's an organization focused on the youngest hockey players and providing a fun experience where everyone participates and develops their skills – on and off the ice. Specifically, the London Ice Dawgs Youth Hockey Club is for kids aged 3 to 9 years old, and the organization is celebrating its milestone 10th season this year!

In all, the Ice Dawgs organization has 20 teams and more than 300 players enrolled – helped by more than 100 volunteers, who assist under the guidance of Total Package Hockey (TPH). The Club plays its games at London Sports Park.

One of those teams is the 'Green Dawgs,' and one of its players, 7-year-old Tavis Rowsom, is the embodiment of what the Ice Dawgs organization stands for – having fun and developing as a player and a person.

This is Tavis's first year playing hockey, and the Grade 2 student loves playing for his coach, John Lehman. He has improved greatly during the 2019-2020 season. In September, he was a beginner skater. Now, he's 'flying down the ice, scoring goals and has a new level of confidence – both on and off the ice.'

Tavis, whose favourite subject in school is Math, works hard both in the classroom and at the rink. He always tries his best, and with the Ice Dawgs, he gets the chance to have fun and improve while meeting new friends.

"I've always believed in the importance of grassroots hockey, and the Ice Dawgs organization is more than just a hockey league," says owner Kim Kearns. "We are a community."

The organization provides professional instruction to all of its players, which is facilitated by Total Package Hockey, ensuring that all youngsters receive high-level instruction from some of the top trainers and hockey skills coaches in the city.

The Ice Dawgs offers a half-ice Introduction Program (IP) for kids aged 3 to 6, and a full-ice MD (Minor Development) program for players aged 6 to 9 who are ready to play 'Real Hockey.'

Players like Tavis – and his teammates on the 'Green Dawgs' – are growing into better players and people thanks to their time playing hockey with the Ice Dawgs organization. And they're having a whole lot of fun along the way.

Go Dawgs Go!

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London Ice Dawgs Beagles Tyke Team: (left to right): Mark, Lucas, AJ, Brayden, Evelyn, Tavis, Jax, Nathan, Gavin, Tristan, Jude, Lauren, Nicolas. Absent: Leo

Strong playoff push in store?

Submitted by Komoka Kings

After a long 2019-2020 regular season, the Komoka Kings clinched a playoff spot once again this year following an up-and-down season (with two games remaining in the regular campaign, at the time of this writing, the Kings were 15-25-1-7 in 48 games). General Manager Roop Chanderdat assembled a young and talented squad of hockey players that have been groomed and guided by Coach Ron Horvat and his assistants.

One of those assistants, Colin Martin, is now in his second year with the Kings. And he has plenty of experience to his name, including three and a half years with the London Knights of the OHL, four years at St. Thomas University, and two years in the ECHL. As the Kings head into the playoffs, they'll also be helped by second-year assistant Mike Reati, who has extensive hockey background as a local player and teacher at the minor and high school level.

> "The Komoka Kings clinched a playoff spot once again this year following an up-and-down season"

Recalling last year's playoff run, Coach Reati said he "enjoyed watching the player development and player improvement that started with a large collection of rookie players and ended one win away from a league final."

He also said he was thrilled to "learn from an excellent communicator in Ron Horvat."

Horvat, who has over 30 years of coaching experience – including stops in the GOJHL in London, St. Thomas and Chatham before joining the Kings for the 2018-2019 season – is proud of this

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Girls bring passion

Contributions by Todd Linton

'Attitude and Effort.' That's been the motto for the London Devilettes Atom A team during the 2019-2020 season, and each of the girls on the squad has worked hard to improve in both areas throughout the year. Playing in the Lower Lakes Female Hockey League, the Atom A Devilettes have also competed in a few tournaments this year, including the 30th anniversary Devilettes Tournament, where they won a pair of games.

Following regular season action, the girls entered the Ontario playdowns in February and into March. They've achieved a lot in 2019-2020 – both on and off the ice.

"First and foremost, the goal has been to have fun," says Todd Linton, the team's coach. "I believe it's important to grow the girls' passion for the game."

The team also set a goal to develop a culture that would foster individual player development, while also working on team skills and learning to depend on one another.

Girls hockey has had a positive impact for so many in London, specifically through organizations like the Devilettes, and Linton thinks there is so much young girls can gain through playing the sport.

"I believe hockey is the single best game one can play. It demands strength, skill, intelligence, and the need to make decisions extremely quickly," says Linton, who has been with the Devilettes program for four years. "Organizations like the London Devilettes offer the opportunity for girls to learn, grow and challenges themselves while making lasting friendships along the way."

London Devilettes Atom A Team: Back row (left to right): Maelle Huls, Riley Puddicombe, Megan Jean, Georgia Chevalier, Isla Linton. Middle row: Avery Puddicombe, Bethany MacKay, Erica Hannam, Lauren Cooper, Brooke Millson. Front row: Taliarose Tamborro, Alexandra Dolson, Shelby Campbell, Charlotte Hines, Sydney Smith, Saydi Hill, Jessica Thompson

year's squad.

"This year has been a success for our organization," Horvat said, as the Kings awaited their opponent in the first round of the GOJHL playoffs. "The kids have developed as players and young men. With the help of all our coaching, training staff, volunteers and the commitment of the players, the team continues to grow in the GOJHL."

www.komokakings.com

The Komoka Kings wrapped up their 2019-2020 regular season in February, and the team was set to open the playoffs against an opponent to be determined in late February/early March. The Kings enjoyed a strong postseason run last year, and they're hopeful to do the same in 2020.

Instruction is the key

Contributions by Snipe Academy

Snipe Academy continues to have a significant impact on the London hockey community, as young players are improving their skills and becoming better all-around hockey players thanks to the top-notch instruction they're receiving at the facility. Snipe has put together a talented group of coaches and instructors, both male and female, who bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to teach the next generation of players. Here's a look at just two of those instructors ...

Austin Osmanski

April Clark

Austin Osmanski

Osmanski, who was born and raised just outside of Buffalo, NY, works Project ice and the Skills and Shooting classes at Snipe Academy. After playing for the Buffalo Regals in his youth, Osmanski made his way into the OHL as a defenseman, splitting time between the Mississauga Steelheads and Peterborough Petes over a four-year career that spanned more than 250 games. During that time, in 2016, Osmanski was drafted by the Buffalo Sabres in the seventh round. Following his OHL career, he enrolled at Western University, where he currently plays for the Mustangs. In his first season in 2019-2020, the 21-year-old tallied eight points in 26 regular season games while playing strong on the blueline.

April Clark

Clark joined Snipe after a highly impressive fourth-year season with the Western Mustangs' Women's hockey team in 2018-2019, where she led all U Sports players in scoring and was named OUA MVP, Forward of the Year, and a 1st Team All-Star (she also earned 1st Team All-Canadian honours). A native of St. Mary's, Clark was also named Western's Female Athlete of the Year. Clark previously led Western to an OUA championship, and she is now completing her fifth and final season with the Mustangs. During the regular campaign, she was fifth in the OUA with 22 points. Clark, a nursing student, also spent two summers playing for USports All Star team at the Canadian National Development camp in Calgary.

www.snipeacademy.com

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Hockey spans generations

By Scott McKay

As part of the Chevrolet 'Good Deeds Cup' competition, the West London Hawks Minor Peewee House League Team (#55) recently partnered with the Alzheimer Society London and Middlesex in a one-of-a-kind intergenerational volunteering experience.

The experience centered around an activity-based social recreation program designed for Alzheimer Society clients with dementia and youth volunteers using games and activities to highlight intergenerational connections. To prepare, the players completed dementia volunteer training and an aging simulation activity. Players were then paired with a client and volunteered in afternoon social recreation programs.

The players also hosted the clients at one of the team's league games – and at a London Knights game. These events were significant, as the clients of the Alzheimer Society were able to engage in community activities that emphasized a love for hockey in a safe, judgement free, and dementia-friendly environment.

Players from the West London Hawks Minor Peewee House League Team (#55) take part in an outing at a London Knights game with clients from the Alzheimer Society London and Middlesex.

Meanwhile, a season-long fundraising campaign focusing on teamwork, called "Assists for Alzheimer's," is also being conducted by the Minor Peewee Hawks, and the campaign collects donations for each assisted goal scored on the ice to support the team's volunteering commitment off the ice. To date, the players have raised hundreds of dollars. You can see the story on YouTube at: https://youtu.be/CR8B6qd7FLk.

Go Hawks go!

Submitted by Scott McKay, head coach of the West London Hawks Minor Peewee House League Team (#55)

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$20 per jumper
Age: From walking to 5yrs
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PACKAGES INCLUDE:

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- Party room set-up & clean-up
- FREE Jump Pass for each guest for a future visit.
- Electronic Invitation
- Sky Zone t-shirt for guest of honour(s)
- 1 pizza per 5 guest
- 3 pitchers of soft drinks (5 for the Super Jump Package)
- Party plates, napkins, cups & untensils
- 1 pair of Sky Socks for each jumper

EXTRA ITEMS:

- Additional Pizza $23.00
- Additional pitcher of pop $5.50
- Dippin' Dots $4.50 each
- Printed Invitations $5/15
- Loot bags $8.50 each
- Additional Sky Socks $3.50/pair
- 30 minutes on a private court $50
- 60 minutes on a private court $100

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All jumpers must have a valid waiver on file, those under 18 must have one completed by a parent/legal guardian.
No outside food or drinks allowed (except cake/cupcakes) Deposit required at time of booking.

A special sponsor thank you

Submitted by George Bray Sports Association

The George Bray Sports Association is now in our 52nd season and, my goodness, how we have grown! Over the past 10 years, we have gone from 14 to 18 full teams – including a Fundamentals program for our newest players. The 2019-2020 season includes more than 250 players registered in either our hockey program and/or our hockey school.

Families that have kids with exceptionalities can have many extra costs. As a result, for some, extracurricular sports are just not in the budget. At GBSA, we rely heavily on the support of our sponsors to help keep our fees the lowest around. So, we want to send a special thank you to each of our sponsors!

The George Bray Sports Association's most recent fundraiser was held prior to last Christmas, where participants from each division took part in a skate-a-thon – and, of course, took time to meet with Santa.

Our 18 team sponsors are:

Junior

- A.H.H.A – Annual Heidelberg Hardware Association
- J-AAR Excavating
- Ken Williams Law Firm
- Tim Horton's (TDL group)
- Kiwanis Forest City London
- Western Ontario Fish & Game Protection Assoc.

Intermediate

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- Burwell Auto Body
- Forest City Castings
- K-WREN
- Skyview Pool and Spa Ltd

Senior

- C.H.A.M.P.S –Canadian Hardware Annual Merchants Pedlar
- Summer's Home Hardware
- Winston and Associates
- Working8 Inc.
- Sports One Photography
- SURKUT Machine Technology Inc.

In addition to the team sponsors, we have many league sponsors that support us. Among the many supporters include:

- AAROC Aggregates Ltd
- London Firefighters
- London's Source for Sports
- Herm's Sport Exchange
- London Central Lions Club

- Rotary Club of Hyde Park
- Rotary Club of London West
- Ivey School of Business
- Sobey's
- Sanders Recreation & Fitness
- London Knights Alumni Association
- And many, many others!

We also hold various fundraisers within our association (our most recent one was held Dec 15, 2019). We hold a skate-a-thon with all of our divisions participating. We were fortunate enough to have a special visitor that day, too, and all the players – young and not so young – were thrilled to see him!

If you are interested in supporting the George Bray Sports Association, or want to learn more about us, please visit our website at www.georgebraysports.ca and find us on Facebook!

www.georgebraysports.ca

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Stars shine bright on the ice

Contributed by Matt Bowes

The St. Thomas Stars Minor Bantam A/AA hockey team has a long list of accomplishments this season, and you can add International Silver Stick Champions to that list. Just how impressive an accomplishment is that? The last St. Thomas team to win the Silver Stick featured a young Joe Thornton – nearly thirty years ago!

The Stars qualified for the tournament back in November by winning the Owen Sound Regional Silver Stick, and they cemented their place in the history books with a thrilling overtime victory over their rivals, the Cambridge Hawks, in a game that had the building absolutely buzzing.

The St. Thomas Stars Minor Bantam A/AA hockey team has enjoyed a stellar 2019-2020 season, including winning the prestigious International Silver Stick Championship, something a St. Thomas team hadn't done in nearly 30 years – when a team with NHLer Joe Thornton accomplished the feat.

The St. Thomas Minor Bantam team has entered five tournaments this season and has earned first place in every single one of them. This is the kind of season that doesn't happen very often in hockey, and although the team has lost games at different times throughout the year, the players always seem to get the job done when it matters most.

Right from the start of the season, this team came together, accepted each other, and pushed through any and all adversity to become one of the very best teams in their age group. The Stars are now ready to challenge for their next goal – becoming OMHA champions.

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Where the story began...

Submitted by EnviroNize

With the world on a steadfast mission of going green, and the need to become totally sustainable not far behind, the thought of bringing home to Canada a 'disinfectant' that would change the way one disinfects was nothing short of EXCITING. And with that mission in hand, **EnviroNize®** was born!

With the concerning news of the Coronavirus spreading around the globe, as well as other viruses and bacteria still making the headlines, the need to be **PROACTIVE in the PREVENTION of PATHOGENS** has never been greater! With the intentions of selling this non-toxic, antimicrobial and antibacterial solution in Canada.

EnviroNize® sought the required Health Canada registrations. **EnviroNize®** has achieved its goal of receiving **Health Canada DIN Registered acceptance**.

Members of the EnviroNize team (left to right): Leo Cuarteros, Operations Manager; Phil Pecoskie, President; Denis Haxha and Rob Horst, Business Development

Today, many more additional registrations have been achieved and others are pending, as **EnviroNize®** makes its debut across many market verticals.

With a high level acceptance as a Disinfectant and Powerful Sanitizer for Electrolyzed Water from the FDA, EPA and Health Canada, **EnviroNize®** has captured the attention of those who are seeking to rid their facilities of chemical based disinfectants and sanitizers for one that offers a much more sustainable environmental approach and a greener solution that WORKS!

EnviroNize® is used as a high-level disinfectant in disinfecting SPORTS EQUIPMENT, eliminating biofilm from drains and pipes, as a powerful sanitizer in sanitizing food contact surfaces with a 'No Rinse Required.'

Its antimicrobial saline properties has made it a phenomenal wound cleansing agent, not to mention its deep cleaning and degreasing features has enabled it to make its way as a cleaning additive in laundry without the use of phosphate detergents — you name it. **EnviroNize®** is real, and it's starting to replace the toxic chemicals Canadians use every day at home and on the job. "It seems like every discipline in facility management is going green these days, and for good reason"; "Green solutions and practices deliver occupational and environmental safety benefits while at the same time often creating operational efficiencies."

www.environize.ca

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A winning winter for rugby club

Submitted by London Annihilators

Your London Annihilators are officially on a heater with back-to-back tournament wins! The club has also enjoyed an unprecedented 15-game winning streak this year! It's rare to see a team at this level play for so long at such a consistently high level.

It all started in Tampa – against an incredibly deep field of the top American club teams. The London Annihilators scrapped it out in pool play, going undefeated including clawing their way past Denver in an ugly one. In the other pool, long-time rivals Quebec upset Texas in a one-point thriller, which set up an all-Canadian final down in the swamp! In a display of poise and precision, London came out ahead to win the tournament.

And then it was on to Phoenix – the duel in the desert. In another deep tournament with teams from all over, including the German national team and Team Canada (minus some key players), London went through pool play undefeated, beating top-ranked Phoenix and Texas. That set up another all-Canadian final, and again London emerged victorious!

All of this could not happen without the generous time and support of so many volunteers and community members. So, thank you to the whole London Annihilators family!

The London Annihilators Wheelchair Rugby team won back-to-back tournaments this winter with their impressive play against top talent from North America and beyond.

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Milestone win for legendary coach

By Charlie Echlin

The final horn rang throughout the WFCU Centre in Windsor on January 23 without any hint of real significance. The only cause for celebration seemed to be that the Knights had collected yet another road win. The players gathered to congratulate goaltender Brett Brochu on another outstanding performance, and the coaching staff quietly shuffled down the tunnel to the dressing room. Just another day's work for a team of young men and their mentors. Except it was a significant win. With the victory, Dale Hunter, the team's head coach, collected his 800th win in the Ontario Hockey League.

The start of Hunter's OHL career might not have seemed so promising. Hunter took over the Head Coaching job 18 games into the 2001-2002 campaign. His first game? In Windsor. The Spitfires took that game, his first behind the bench, by a score of four to one. His second game was at the old Ice House, where the Knights faced the Sarnia Sting – and came away on the losing end again, this time in overtime. But the third time was the charm, and Hunter captured his first OHL win in his third game when the Knights beat the Kitchener Rangers 6-3.

Since that day in November of 2001, the numbers in the win column for Hunter have increased at a remarkable pace. Coupled with a rebuilding of the Knights' scouting system and management, Dale's coaching style has made the green and gold synonymous with success. The rate at which he has earned his 800 wins means that he could pass Brian Kilrea's OHL record of 1,193 wins in 10 more seasons – which would be five years shorter than the successful long-time Ottawa head coach.

What would Dale say about this? Nothing, of course. A farmer at heart, Hunter understands that the only way something gets better is if you work on it. Celebrating what happened yesterday only means that you'll miss what you could have done today. What Dale has taken from his success is what can be learned from those 800 games. In other words, do not try and chase records. Otherwise, you will miss what is right in front of you. Play today's game, not tomorrow's or yesterday's.

When the team returned to Budweiser Gardens to face the Hamilton Bulldogs the day following Hunter's milestone 800th win, his accomplishment was given a moment of recognition at the arena. Thousands cheered and applauded over the announcer's voice while they saw the number '800' flash on the scoreboard. The man to whom they were showing their appreciation gave a wave and a quick smile before returning to his stoic demeanour. There was still a game to be played, after all.

www.londonknights.com

With a win back in January (on the road against Windsor), London Knights head coach Dale Hunter earned the 800th win in his Ontario Hockey League coaching career.

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Is Structural Integration right for you?

By Gwen MacLean for Living Balance Clinic

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I spent 25 years with chronic back pain. My back pain wouldn't allow me to lift anything heavy or do deep forward bending without going out. Every time my back went out, it was three days of not being able to walk, sit or sleep without a lot of pain – and it meant many trips for acute pain relief therapy. However, once I was treated with the Rolf Method of Structural Integration, my back pain went away, and my back finally felt strong. Now, my body works functionally, easily handling the stresses of daily life. And I am able to do all the things that in the past could have caused my back to go out.

In 2014, I became a Registered Massage Therapist, and in 2015 I became a Certified Rolf Method Structural Integrator. Since then, I have been working with my clients to help them reach their goals. I recently worked with two soccer players with past injuries that were preventing them from playing to their full abilities. I also worked with a senior hockey player who had five years of chronic hip flexor pain and a limp due to having several falls on his hip during a hockey game. After Structural Integration, the players felt that their bodies were more fluid and functional, and they had no pain and had minimal exercise recovery time.

Athletes experiencing injuries and/or pain may be helped by the Rolf Method of Structural Integration (offered at the Living Balance Clinic), which uses safe touch, safe movement and repatterning exercises to help alleviate pain and a more healthy functioning body.

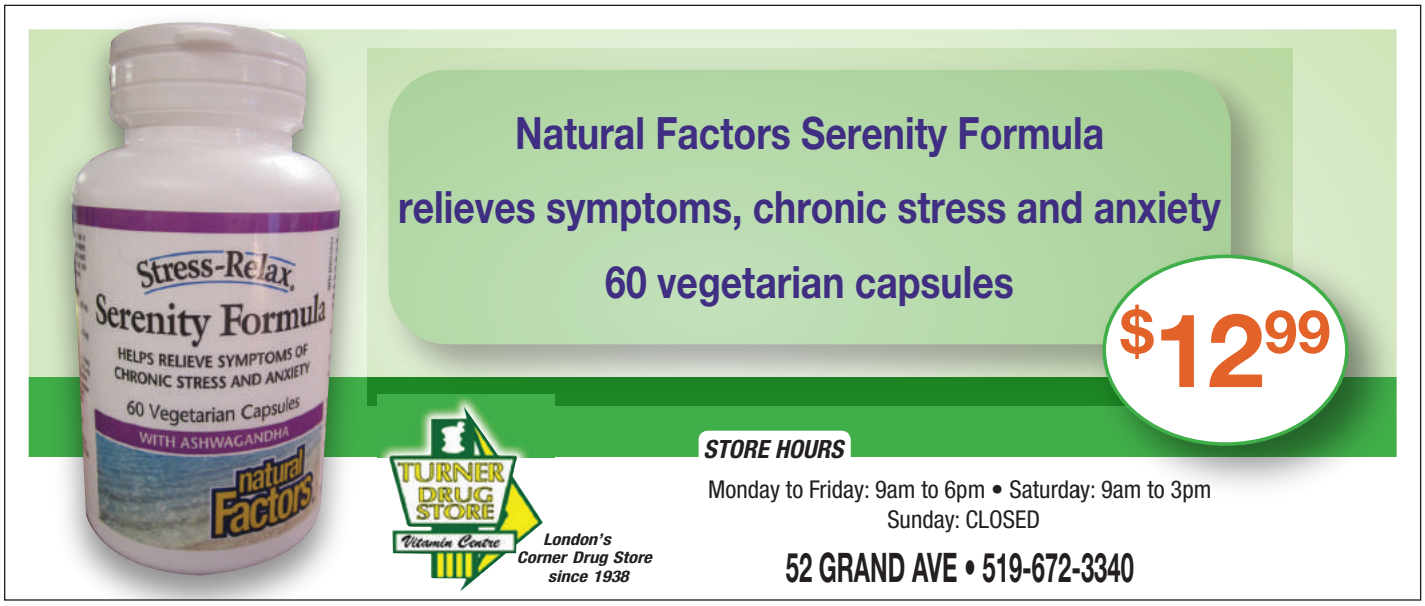
Structural Integration uses the latest pain science research – it uses a specialized combination of safe touch, safe movement and repatterning exercises, and a self-care program that mimics what we do in the office sessions to elicit massive positive results. In the treatments, I tap into the brain and update the messaging signals between the brain and the body. I do this by using the touch on your tissue while you make small safe movements. In this way, we connect the brain back to each body part so that the brain understands how functional movements should happen – and the restricted, stuck tissues begin to soften. We work the whole body (not just the area that is sending pain signals) because the body works as an integrated unit and one area of restriction can create symptoms in a totally different part of the body.

Some amazing things happen in the sessions. I have seen clients with shoulder issues who have sought help for years to gain better function and relieve the pain to no avail. Often, we find that the issue is restricted tissue in the pelvic region that is creating a strain or pull into the shoulder area. Until that area in the pelvis is released and repatterned, the shoulder issue will continue to plague them. Treatment is effective if the area of restriction is worked and repatterned.

I offer free one-hour consultations for anyone interested in going through a very thorough health history and discussing their goals to see if Structural Integration is right for them. There are 10 sessions in total in the series, and each session releases the restricted stuck connective tissue in your body layer by layer. After the 10 sessions, to maintain and continue the positive change, a tune-up every two to three months is all that is required.

If you are looking for a body that functions better, feels lighter and easier, and has less pain, Structural Integration may be for you.

www.livingbalanceclinic.ca



A hockey club for all

Contributions by Jay Mandel

The Red Circle Hockey Club dates back to 1971, and the originating philosophy continues to be the driving force for the organization today: 'Equal Opportunity Regardless of Ability.'

Add to that a lot of fun, says Jay Mandel, who currently serves as league president.

"Red Circle Hockey is a place for all to play and be welcome," says Mandel, who has been a board member/executive for the last 15 years. "We want to keep the basics going and develop on the same ideas as the men who started this league."

Those ideas, from individuals like Mac Beach, Al Langille, and Jim Leonard, focused on providing an opportunity for kids (and parents) who didn't want to play stringent competitive hockey. They just wanted to be involved in a hockey program where they would be treated equally and get as much ice time as everyone else.

Today, the league consists of dozens of teams and more than 1,000 players aged 4 to 20 (from Mite to Juvenile).

"We cater to all levels of hockey abilities," says Mandel. "From beginners to highly competent, and both House League and Select."

Besides a lively and fun House League, which continues to grow, the Red Circle Hockey Club competes against other centres in southwestern Ontario through its Select program. Players who are registered and play in the House League program make up the Select teams.

What else is happening at Red Circle?

"We started a coaches training program, which has been advanced and made better over the years," says Mandel. "And we have continued on with a golf tournament, which helps with costs and makes money for deserving players to play for the organization at no cost to them. The latter [program] was started by the Armstrong family in the name of their son, Steven, who was tragically taken from us."

And what are the goals for the organization going forward? Simply put, Mandel says, to have more players in the area want to play Red Circle Hockey. After all, it not only provides 'Equal Opportunity Regardless of Ability,' but it's also a lot of fun!

www.redcirclehockeyclub.com

London Red Circle Raiders: Back row (left to right): Stan Marsh, Thomas Clavet, Kaden Pinto, Logan Cripps, Noah Clavet. Front row: Alyssa Coombs, Dominic George, Travis James, Aaron Tang, Davis Roadhouse, Josh Allen

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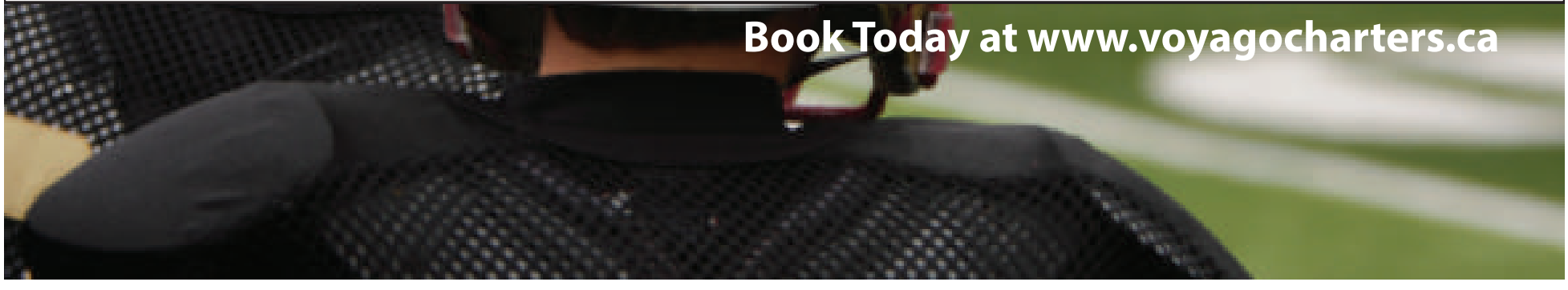

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